

Are Used Car Seats Safe?

With the advent of eBay and other auction sites, the buying and selling of used items has completely lost any kind of social stigma - no-one need be ashamed of buying something that has been used by someone else. In fact it can be real fun trying to find used bargains online or in garage sales.

But when it comes to buying used cars seats, there can only be one piece of advice - DON'T!

With car seats, safety is the big issue - in fact the ONLY issue. Remember that this piece of equipment is not just a handy receptacle for transporting your precious bundle - it's the one thing that could save your baby's life in an emergency.

The problem with buying a used car seat is that you don't really know its history. It's possible that it may have been in an accident and so may have been damaged. This damage may be invisible to the eye; tiny fissures or stress points may have occurred, which could cause the car seat to fail in another accident, putting your baby at serious risk!

But of course, its easy to say, "Don't do it." Many of us are not lucky enough to be able to afford a new car seat, and many of us will just be attracted by the whole idea of getting a car seat at a bargain price. And in this wasteful world that we live in, isn't it morally right that we try to recycle products that are still perfectly serviceable, even if the original owners don't need them anymore?

With this in mind, if you are going to buy a used car seat, here are a few tips to ensure that you do it safely:

1. Buy from a friend or family member - and even then, only if you know the history of the seat.
2. Ask for written verification that the car seat has never been involved in an accident. If this isn't possible, walk away.
3. Make sure the instructions are still available - you need to know how to fix it correctly and you also need to be sure it is the right seat for your type of car.
4. Examine it for visible signs of damage. Even a seat that has not been in an accident may no longer be safe. Heat, cold, humidity and sunlight can cause major damage over time, including plastic corrosion, wear or stiffness in the straps. Adjustments can also cause uneven wear in the straps and harnesses, or damage to the padding and covers.
5. Write down the car seat manufacturer, model number and serial number. Then call the National Highway Traffic & Safety Association (NHTSA) on (888) DASH-2-DOT to check that this model has not been recalled.
6. Double check that the seat is suitable for your child's weight and height.
7. Test out the seat in your car. If you can't get it to fit properly, don't buy it!

Ask yourself, if your child's safety is worth more than the few dollars you will save by buying a used car seat. There is really only one answer, but if you must insist on taking this option, use the tips above and you should at least be able to do so, safely.

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About the Author

Michael Barrows' website has great advice for choosing baby names, baby name lists and lots of great baby resources. Get your free ebook packed with baby tips for new parents, visit <http://www.all-about-baby-names.com>