

Over the River and Through the Woods, Safely Buckled Up We Go!

November 19, 2014

New York, NY, Nov. 19, 2014 – More than 43 million Americans traveled for Thanksgiving last year and ninety percent of them did so by car.^[1] That’s why, as we approach the busiest travel season of the year, travel safety information is more important than ever – especially for children. Did you know that children’s winter coats should be removed before placing them in a car seat? What about the startling fact that three out of four car seats are incorrectly installed?

Buckle Up for Life, the national child passenger safety program from Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center and Toyota, released the following top safety tips to help keep child passengers safe during the holidays:

- **TIP #1: Use the Inch Test and the Pinch Test.**

Before your family heads out on the road for the holidays – even if you are traveling a short distance – double-check that your car seat is installed properly. You can access easy ways to check this, including the Inch Test and the Pinch Test, at www.BuckleUpforLife.org.

- **TIP #2: Remove Your Child’s Winter Coat.**

Before securing your child in their seat, remove their winter coat. A coat can prevent the harness from fitting correctly. It also could compress in a crash, compromising the seat’s ability to protect your child.

- **TIP #3: Traveling By Plane? Check Your Seat for FAA Approval.**

If your child plans to sit in their car seat on a plane, make sure the seat is approved by the FAA. An approved car seat will fit in the airplane seat properly and its harness will hold your child securely in the event of turbulence. Information about your car seat’s FAA approval can be found on the side of the car seat.

- **TIP #4: Don’t Rent a Car Seat.**

If you are renting a car, use your own car seat. When you rent a seat you don’t know important facts about its history that could affect its ability to protect your child (e.g., expiration date, crash history, etc.) The good news is that most airlines allow you to check your car seat for free.

- **TIP #5: Secure Holiday “Extras” in the Car.**

Make sure that all gifts, luggage and other objects are tightly secured in your vehicle. These objects could become projectiles in the event of a crash. Also, if you are traveling with your pets, make sure they are properly restrained as well.

For additional tips and advice, including animated car seat installation videos, visit BuckleUpforLife.org. The site

“These tips may seem simple, but they are critical for families to keep in mind – whether you’re traveling far this holiday season or staying local with friends and family,” said Gloria DelCastillo, child passenger safety expert at Cincinnati Children’s and national program manager for *Buckle Up for Life*. “Our goal is for every child to be

safe – this holiday season and year round.”

“We know that for many families the holidays are special – and especially hectic,” said Latondra Newton, chief social innovation officer of Toyota Motor North America. “But no matter how busy or frazzled we may be this holiday season, we all must make time to help ensure that our children are safe. That’s why these tips from *Buckle Up for Life* are so important.”

Buckle Up for Life Convenes Child Passenger Safety Experts for Twitter Chat on Holiday Travel Tips

Buckle Up for Life will host a Twitter chat today with child passenger safety experts from 2:00 pm to 2:30, ET to answer questions about proper car seat installation, special tips for holiday travel, how to choose the correct seat as well as common installation mistakes and how to avoid them. You can take part by following the hashtag #BuckleUpforLife.

The chat will feature expert advice from Gloria Del Castillo and Donna Laake, both child passenger safety experts at Cincinnati Children’s.

The chat is part of *Buckle Up for Life’s* mission to educate families about the proper use of car seats and seat belts and provide free car seats to families in need. Over the last ten years, *Buckle Up for Life* has grown to include a network of 14 of the nation’s leading children’s hospitals and has educated more than 17,000 people. Toyota’s sponsorship has provided funding for over 40,000 car seats for families in need.

[1] Source: AAA <http://newsroom.aaa.com/2013/11/aaa-43-4-million-americans-to-travel-for-thanksgiving-a-slight-decline-from-last-year/>