

PROCEDURE FOR: Car Seat Monitoring

- POLICY:
1. All infants born at less than 37 weeks gestation or under 2500 gms and those with chronic lung disease, or requirement at discharge, or neurologic issues will have a period of observation and monitoring in a car seat prior to discharge from NICU/NBN/SCN. This testing should be done approximately 24 hours to 48 hours before anticipated discharge.
 2. Infants with documented oxygen desaturation, apnea or bradycardia while in the semi upright position should travel using a safety device that permits supine positioning. These infants should not be discharged from the hospital until a device for safe travel is obtained. Failure of the monitoring period is defined as:
 - a. Bradycardia < 80 bpm for > 5 seconds or
 - b. Apnea • 20 seconds duration or
 - c. O₂ Saturation < 85% for 5 seconds or longer or
 - d. Central cyanosis
 3. The duration of monitoring will be a minimum of one hour or the equivalent of duration of infant's ride home from the hospital plus time for securing/unloading.
 4. Infants who fail car seat testing will have evaluation of cardiopulmonary status done to include corrected gestational age, presence of lung disease or reflux, breathing patterns and airway issues prior to having recommendations made for car bed. If the pulse oximeter has been discontinued, resumption of oximetry monitoring may be indicated. The assessment and management plan must be documented. Continued hospitalization, memory monitor test or pneumogram may be needed.

EQUIPMENT: Infant's Car Seat
Oximeter
Cardiac Monitor
Blankets/rolls for positioning
Large crib or Porta-crib

PROCEDURE:

- | <u>ACTION</u> | <u>POINTS OF INTEREST</u> |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Infant will be placed in his/her car seat, with straps adjusted securely around the infant. You should be able to fit no more than 1 finger between the harness and the baby's collar bone. The seat should be reclined at a 45° angle. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Blankets should not be placed under the baby's bottom to prop the baby or help with the positioning. The baby's buttocks should be flat against the back of the car seat. Blankets or head rolls can be used to support the infant's head or body at the sides. A small rolled blanket may be placed between the crotch strap and the infant to reduce slumping.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Handouts are available to assist families in choosing an appropriate infant car seat. The web site of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org is another resource. |

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ACTION

POINTS OF INTEREST

2. Place the car seat in a large crib or porta-crib, if a large crib is not available.
 3. Determine time needed for car seat test.
 4. Begin car seat test.
 5. Explain to family that the test only assesses infants for a short time. Long car rides and unnecessary car rides are to be avoided. Instruct families not to leave infant in the car seat upon return home because some babies may not be able to tolerate being in an upright position for an extended period of time.
 6. Document in progress notes or on flowsheet that car seat monitoring was done and summarize vital signs, saturations, and other observations.
 - a. If the infant fails the monitoring period, repeat testing may be done 24 hours later or a memory monitor test may be ordered.
 7. Avoid recommending that parents purchase a car bed until further assessment of the infant's status or testing is completed.
 8. If car bed is recommended.
 - a. Test infant in car be, documenting tolerance as for car seat test.
 - b. Instruct families to avoid using any upright equipment such as swings, carriers, infant seats.
- b. Give parents phone numbers for police departments that can do car seat safety checks in their area. The auto safety hotline is 800-424-9393.
 - c. Families may sign up for an on-site care seat evaluation. Sign-up sheets are available in the SCN hallway.
 5. Passing the test does not guarantee cardio-respiratory stability for long periods of time.
 6. Report to MD/AP if the infant fails to tolerate the monitoring period.
 7. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that car beds be crash - tested and that an adult ride in the back seat with infants in car beds.

APPROVAL: Nursing Standards Committee

EFFECTIVE DATE: 4/91

REVISION DATES: 3/92, 8/93, 2/97, 1/00, 3/03, 5/05, 2/06