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expired car seat can be dangerous, especially if you don't know the car seat's history." Expiration dates are prescribed due to the plastics composing many car seat shells. Over time, these plastics wear down and become brittle. Education organization Car Seats for the Littles describes a familiar scenario, "Remember that time you sat down in a plastic lawn chair that had been sitting outside for several summers, and crashed right through the ground? The same is possible for a car seat that has expired: the plastic could break apart and fail to serve its purpose of keeping a child safe and unharmed in a crash." Car seats are exposed to varying temperatures, direct sunlight, and jostling through use; their plastics receive a considerable amount of stress. So, in addition to selecting from a variety of manufacturers, with a variety of models and patterns, parents must also consider the structural material and how long ago the car seat was produced.Selecting the right car seat"The AAP advises parents to keep their toddlers in rear-facing car seats until age two, or until they reach the maximum height and weight for their seat." To begin, parents will consider their child's age and weight; these factors will indicate which seat style (Infant, Convertible, or Booster) is safest for protecting the child. Infant: Infant car seats are used for babies from birth to up to 35 pounds (depending on seat model). Infant seats are rear-facing and typically include a handle allowing the carrier to click in and out of the installed car seat base. Convertible: Convertible car seats are used for babies and toddlers up to 50 pounds (depending on seat model). Convertible seats can be used for an extended time period (within their plastic life limits) as they "convert" from rear- to front-facing once the child has met recommended age/weight limits. Booster: Belt-positioning booster seats are used for children who exceed the height/weight limits for their forward-facing car seats. Boosters can be backless or high back and are typically used until children reach about 4 feet 9 inches (depending on state laws). Child passenger safety laws vary by state. Parents should be aware of laws in their state and can visit the IIHS List of State Laws for Vehicle Restraints.Examine vehicle bench space: When selecting a car seat, parents will want to examine the bench space in their vehicle, taking careful notice of both type of seat belt (as this can impact seat selection) and the amount of space. For vehicles with little room in the back seat, a car seat with a narrower base might be a better option.Note harness adjuster location: Infant and convertible car seats have adjustable harness straps to grow with babies. The adjustments may be made with a knob or lever on the side, back, or front of the seat. Consider car seat placement and other car seats or siblings in the car to ensure the harness adjuster is accessibly located. Chest clip options: Most new car seat models have a two-piece chest clip, as these are more difficult for children to unfasten. However, there are still some brands/ models that use the one-piece chest clip, so parents should be aware of this feature while making their decision.Consider cleaning: In addition to a myriad of adorable colors and patterns, each car seat option is made of different fabrics. Parents may want to consider fabric, along with the seat shape and design when selecting a car seat, as these features will impact how easy the seat is to clean. Textured fabrics on a model with deep creases may be more difficult to clean in the case of a... mess. Smoother fabrics will wipe clean more easily.Car Seat Installation TipsHere are some general tips and reminders for car seat installation. This information in no way replaces instructions in the car seat's user manual; it is imperative that parents thoroughly read the seat's instructions to ensure safe car seat installation and use.Infant car seat installation Infant car seats should be installed rear-facing in the back seat of the vehicle. Install car seat while the vehicle is parked on level ground to facilitate proper seat angle adjustments. Ensure the harness straps are fed through the seat slots at or below the baby's shoulders to avoid any slack. "Do not place padding under or behind your infant or use any sort of car seat insert unless it came with the seat or was made by the manufacturer for use with that specific seat." To avoid infant slouching, some manufacturers allow a tightly rolled cloth to be placed between the crotch strap and the infant (review manual for this indication). Convertible car seat installation "Always use the top tether when you can. A tether is a strap that is attached to the top part of a car safety seat and holds the seat tightly by connecting to an anchor point in your vehicle." Check both car seat and vehicle user guides to ensure belts are used and fed according to indications. Position harness straps as close to the child's shoulders as possible. Regularly check to ensure harness straps have not twisted or tangled. Booster car seat installation Ensure the vehicle's seat belt crosses directly over the child's upper thighs. The shoulder belt should cross the middle of the child's chest and not touch the child's neck. Many high-back boosters have shoulder belt guide-slots to ensure proper positioning. Your cart is empty Not seeing items you've added? Sign in "I've never met a person who knew more about strollers than you, thank you!" "Who else to ask if not you, Eli?" "Thanks to Eli, we chose the right stroller - it wouldn't be possible without her. I had many requirements, to be honest, but thanks to Eli and her professional perspective, I changed my priorities " I got recommended to find stroller help here, so here I am -> "Thank you for creating the only place to go to!" "The first time around, we did not choose what you suggested. And I thought so many times how big a mistake that was. The second time around, we chose what you advised, and it works just as we needed! @ "Thank you for all the work you do here. It helps us all immensely." "Did you study this? In any case, thank you for the advice and all the info and measurements I was able to find here." "I love your 'strollerpedia!'" "I have read many of your reviews as well as some of the stroller guides of a more general nature... they're extremely helpful & very easy to understand!" "What a great stroller counseling! I found so many tips that are so useful for us, first-time parents that don't know yet what to look for @ "You're the smartest stroller person there is!" "Thank you so much! I didn't expect such a brilliant answer!" "Thank you for an elaborate answer and this whole place; it helped us orientate in the vast sea of strollers out there!" "After a consultation with you, we bought a Baby Jogger City Elite. It's just what we needed. I am so glad we have it." "Thank you so much for your answer. It helped a loooot." "I finally found someone that actually knows her way around strollers (and uses that knowledge to help)." "Thank you so much for all your help! You helped us so much dezer194 "I am very grateful for your answer as well as all the information in this stroller 'database.' You know so much about strollers." flowwily "Thank you for all your work here" ProudParentsJV "On account of all the mums, myself included, thank you for you're helping us get over our worries!" Alice "Thank you for your advice, you're awesome!" Evie "yesssssss :j sorry damn autocorrect @ Many thanks for your answer!" Ya If your car seat was involved in a moderate or severe crash, discontinue use immediately. For minor crashes, refer to the NHTSA guidelines to determine if the seat is still safe to use. Consider car seat placement and other car seats or siblings in the car to ensure the harness adjuster is accessibly located. Chest clip options: Most new car seat models have a two-piece chest clip, as these are more difficult for children to unfasten. However, there are still some brands/ models that use the one-piece chest clip, so parents should always check yours when buying to ensure it can serve you for a longer period.The expiration dates do not necessarily mean that the seat has become useless immediately after that day. It is not even illegal to have an expired car seat. The truth is, in the United States, car seat manufacturers are not required by law to put an expiry date on the product. However, reputable car seat manufacturers do so to make users aware that they can only guarantee the product's safety for a limited period.Why Do Car Seats Expire? Some people think that manufacturers emphasize car seats expiring as a marketing ploy. However, it is not a tactic to increase sales for car seat manufacturers; these products expire, and there are various reasons why they do: Technological advancementsYou cannot compare a phone manufactured a decade ago with the one you are currently using because of the features added. Similarly, car seats produced years ago cannot offer the same features as the recent ones. Regardless of how well-maintained it is, an old car seat will lack some enhancements vital to saving lives.Crash tests are always being done to ensure that advanced technology to improve the chances of survival during accidents is installed with each recent production. Britax is known for its safety technology; thus, it employs SafeCell Impact Protection in its car seats. Therefore, the infant seats have an impact-absorbing base, different side impact protection levels, and impact-stabilizing frame.Older car seats lack some of these advanced technological features; hence replacing them before or as soon as they expire is crucial. DeteriorationCar seats usually remain in the car for long periods; therefore, they are exposed to changing weather conditions. The heat, cold, and humidity will eventually take a toll on the seat's materials, reducing its quality. Plastic is especially affected by extreme heat or cold, and the expansion and contraction will negatively affect the car seat. Therefore if the plastic looks faded, yet it was originally gray or black, has dents, or cracks, it is time to get a new car seat.Rust in the metal frames also reduces safety during a collision, as supported by crash tests conducted in Sweden. A rusty chassis and body increase the likelihood of death by 20%, so you can imagine what little chances your child has of surviving in an accident if placed in a rusty car seat.Regular wear and tear from everyday use also deteriorate your car seats. As much as you may try to maintain it, you cannot prevent it from showing signs of the years it has served you. When it starts showing, be sure to replace it. Discontinuation and RecallsUpon purchasing a car seat, it is important to register it with the manufacturer to keep you updated with any news regarding the product. If a recall happens, it usually means that the car seat is faulty, and using it will defeat its purpose. In most cases, the faults can be fixed, but if they cannot, then the manufacturer will discontinue production and inform users to stop using it.Discontinuation could also be due to changing standards that make previous models unfit to use. When car seats are discontinued, getting replacement parts becomes a challenge; thus, you might as well get the newer model. Britax Expiration Dates and Where to Find Expiration Date on Britax Car Seatsource Here is a table that includes Britax infant car seat expiration dates and owners manuals.6 years after the date of manufacture.Located on infant car seat and base.6 years after the date of manufacture.Located on infant car seat and base. Britax Convertible Car Seat Expiration Date and Owners Manuals: Britax Booster Car Seat Expiration Dates and Owners Manuals:9 years after the date of manufacture.Label on back of car booster10 years after the date of manufacture.Label on back of car boosterPioneer Harness-2-Booster Seat 9 years after the date of manufacture.Label on back of car booster 10 years after the date of manufacture. Label on bottom of booster (under User Guide)Britax® Essentials™ Skyline Belt-Positioning Booster10 years after the date of manufacture.Label on bottom of booster (under User Guide) Midpoint Belt-Positioning Booster 10 years after the date of manufacture. Label on bottom of booster (under User Guide) DualFit Harness-2-Booster 9 years after the date of manufacture. Label on back of car booster Grow With You (Regular, ClickTight, and Plus) 9 years after the date of manufacture. Label on back of car boosterWhat to Do with Your Britax Car Seat When It Expiresource Donate Your Used Car SeatAn expired car seat means safety is no longer optimal, so you cannot donate it to other people regardless of its good condition. However, it can come in handy in demonstration classes. Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs ) are car seat experts trained in car seats, harnessing procedures, and vehicle differences. They put their knowledge to practice through community presentation and child car seat safety checks.Since we learn better by observing, a CPST will have better chances of passing on the information regarding car seats to caregivers by demonstrating with a car seat. Therefore, before you trash yours, make sure that your CPST does not need one. Trade In Your Used Car SeatThere is no use in holding on to an expired car seat when you can get a new one at a discount. Target is popularly known for its trade-in program, and although the 2020 one has expired, you can be on the lookout for the next one. The trade-in program does not mind even if your expired car seat is in bad shape. They also accept all kinds of car seats, including convertible car seats, infant car seats, car seat bases, and booster seats. With its wide online selection, Target.com will provide you with many options for the car seat, based on color and brand. So, you might be lucky and get another Britax car seat if you are loyal to the brand. The coupons are usually for use in-store or online. You can also opt for the Walmart trade-in program, which offers a \$30 gift card instead of a 20% discount. Recycle Your Used Car SeatIf your children are past the age of using car seats, you can decide to recycle the expired car seat. However, you should note that the curbside recycling program does not normally accept infant car seats, so be sure to check that there is a local recycling program near you and ask them if they accept plastic from the seat. If they do, ask how they like it delivered; some do not mind the car seat brought in without dismantling while others request that you break it down first.If they prefer dismantling it first, remove any non-recyclable materials they will not need, such as padding, fabric, and metal. You can then take the recyclable plastic parts to the program. Still, if this sounds like too much work for you, there are recycling programs that require you to pay for the shipping box and follow a certain guideline. Trash HF you cannot recycle it, trade it in or donate it. Before you do, take the seat apart to avoid a desperate family taking it and putting their child at risk. Like when taking it to the recycling plant, remove the padding, straps, metal, and cover and mark the seat's plastic "unsafe" or "expired." Wrapping UPAfter six or ten years, your car seat is not going to protect your child anymore. Fortunately, there are many options for getting rid of it. Of course, most people who still have a child would go for the trade-in option, but regardless of the method you choose, your mind will be at peace knowing that your child's safety is not compromised by holding on to an expired seat. So, have you checked your car seat's expiration date? Choosing the right car seat for your child is one of the most important decisions you'll make as a parent. It's a crucial investment in their safety and well-being, especially during those young years when they are most vulnerable. Britax, a renowned brand in the car seat industry, is known for its commitment to safety and innovation. But with so many different models and features, a common question arises: How long do Britax car seats last?Understanding the lifespan of a Britax car seat is essential for ensuring your child's continued protection on the road. This comprehensive guide will delve into the factors that determine the longevity of Britax car seats, explore the different stages of car seat use, and provide valuable insights to help you make informed decisions about your child's car seat needs.Understanding Britax Car Seat LifespansBritax car seats are designed to provide optimal safety and protection for children of varying ages and sizes. However, their lifespan is not indefinite and is influenced by several factors:1. Weight and Height LimitsEvery Britax car seat has specific weight and height limits. These limits are determined by rigorous safety testing and ensure that the car seat provides the appropriate level of protection for a child of a particular size. Exceeding these limits can compromise the car seat's effectiveness in a crash.2. Expiration DatesBritax car seats, like all car seats, have an expiration date. This date is typically printed on a label on the car seat and indicates the maximum period for which the car seat is considered safe to use. The expiration date is often set at six years from the date of manufacture.3. Damage and Wear and TearOver time, car seats can sustain damage or wear and tear from regular use, accidents, or improper handling. Any damage to the car seat's structure, harness, or other components can compromise its safety.4. Proper Care and MaintenanceFollowing the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning, storing, and inspecting your Britax car seat is crucial for extending its lifespan. Regular cleaning, proper storage, and prompt repairs can help prevent damage and ensure the car seat remains safe and functional. (See Also: Where Can I Take a Used Car Seat? - Find Safe Options)Stages of Car Seat UseBritax offers a range of car seats designed for different stages of a child's development. Understanding these stages and the corresponding car seat requirements is essential for choosing the right seat and ensuring your child's safety throughout their car-riding years:1. Rear-Facing Car SeatsInfants and toddlers should always ride rear-facing for as long as possible, ideally until they reach the maximum weight or height limit specified by the car seat manufacturer. Rear-facing provides the best protection for a child's head, neck, and spine in a crash.2. Forward-Facing Car SeatsOnce a child outgrows the rear-facing limit, they can transition to a forward-facing car seat. These seats are designed to protect children who are facing forward in the vehicle.3. Booster SeatsBooster seats are used for older children who have outgrown their forward-facing car seats but are still too small to use a standard adult seat belt safely and comfortably. Booster seats elevate the child so that the seat belt fits properly.Britax Car Seat Models and LifespansBritax offers a wide variety of car seat models, each designed for specific age ranges and weight limits. While the general lifespan guidelines apply to all Britax car seats, specific models may have varying expiration dates or weight/height limits. It's always essential to consult the user manual and label on your specific Britax car seat for detailed information about its lifespan and usage instructions.Tips for Extending the Lifespan of Your Britax Car SeatProper care and maintenance can significantly extend the lifespan of your Britax car seat and ensure its continued safety. (See Also: How to Add Seat Warmers to Car? Easy Installation Guide!) \*\*Regularly inspect your car seat for any damage or wear and tear.\*\* \*\* \*\*Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and storing your car seat.\*\* \*\* \*\*Avoid exposing your car seat to extreme temperatures or direct sunlight.\*\* \*\* \*\*Do not modify or tamper with your car seat in any way.\*\* \*\* \*\*If you are involved in a car accident, even a minor one, inspect your car seat for damage and replace it if necessary.\*\* Britax seats don't have an expiry date. They told me that via email when I enquired about using one of their First Class seats (that was bought for my first baby in 2006) for my third baby due March 2012. She turned out to be a very petite child, so I'm still occasionally using the seat rear facing for her aged 3 1/2 as she doesn't even weigh 13kgs yet. So it's 9 1/2 years old now. They said as long as it's an R44/04 seat (current standards, which your KidFix will be) and hadn't been in a collision it was fine to use. Apparently the plastic they use doesn't degrade over time. There might be a manufacture date stamped on the seat somewhere, possibly a series of dials in the plastic pointing to a month and a year. But definitely no expiry date. Once your car seat has expired, it should no longer be used. To prevent it from being used by someone else, Britax recommends dismantling the seat by cutting the harness and removing the cover, then recycling the plastic shell if possible. Some communities offer car seat recycling programs, or you can check with local waste management for proper disposal guidelines. A British company Britax was established in the thirties of the 20th century. It began with the production of car seat belts for adults. Excelsior Motors bought the company in 1963, and since then, Britax has started to focus on the safety of children too. In 1966 Britax has introduced the first car seat for children. In 1978, Britax has acquired Römer, a german company that was producing safety helmets since 1872. Römer was focusing on manufacturing safety equipment for kids since 1970s (in 1971, it was the Römer Peggy car seat, and in 1975, the Römer Peggy Mobil stroller was launched). In 1977, german Britax Römer, in cooperation with Volkswagen, developed the ISOFIX system, which is currently the international standard for attachment points for child safety seats in cars. Britax Römer was the first company achieving the ECE R44 approval label in 1981. In Great Britain and other European countries, the company launched a safety system with the R44 approval label. The Side Impact Protection from 1966 - a system with added layers of foam in the sides of the car seat was in 2002 extended into the first headrest able to absorb the impact of a side and rear crash.Nowadays, Britax Römer is a global company with factories all over the world. The company is focusing on maximizing child safety on the go - either in the car seat, stroller, baby carrier or in the bike seat. Britax Römer is a holder of over 30 patents, and their products are passing safety tests with excellent results. The brand is producing strollers from 2007 and expanding since. In 2011, the company acquired a jogging & running stroller brand BOB. In 2013, Swedish company Brio has joined Britax Römer, and finally, in 2017, Britax Römer acquired the Danish high-end brand Seed. Britax is offering a wide range of strollers with almost everything what the parent may need. Lightweight and compact B-Agile and B-Motion strollers, available in a double version too, are also a part of the portfolio of the brand, along with the all-terrain Go range, lead by the highest Go Big. There is also the single-to-double convertible B-Ready stroller and various ultra-lightweight travel strollers. All strollers are combining high safety standard with a modern and functional design. At BestReviews we do our own testing. Each product that comes through our Testing Lab receives a hands-on evaluation by one of our skilled testers. We test products in real-world environments, including our own kitchens, backyards and home offices. As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases. I've been running this site and writing about baby gear for longer than I care to remember, and the issue of car seat expiration dates is easily one of the most confusing. And it's not a naive affair...it's a real problem because over 70% of baby restraints are misused in some way (1). Yes, you read that right...it's mind-boggling. It's a massive problem, but we can only tackle it one step at a time. Today, I'm going down a narrow rabbit hole and addressing the expiration dates of a single brand - Britax. This is what I'll cover: What does the expiration date mean?Where do you find the date on a Britax car seat?Britax seat types, most popular models, and their respective expiration dates (Pavilion, Marathon, One-Life, Grow with You, Allegiance, etc.)What to do with an expired car seat The expiration date of a car seat is typically in the range of 6 to 10 years from the manufacturing date. Simply put, it's a way for car seat manufacturers to convey when the car seat might become unsafe. The primary reason for its existence is the wear and tear of the materials. Other, less common reasons why a car seat might expire include recalls and changes in safety regulation. Let's get specific and talk about Britax infant car seats. 6 years for infant car seats and belt-positioning booster seats7 years for most convertible car seats10 years for the convertible seats from the ClickTight series 6 years for the Britax infant car seats and bases (including belt-positioning booster seats and child/older infant seats)9 years for the Frontier Harness-2-Booster seats (made from 2008 to 2010) The expiration date of a Britax car seat is on the label (under the seat cover or on the side of the seat) and on the base. Below is a rundown of some more popular Britax models with expiration dates. Britax infant seatExpiration date (years after the date of manufacture)B-Safe Gen26B-Safe Gen2 Flexi6B-Safe 356B-Safe 35 Elite6Eendeavours6B-Safe Ultra6 Britax booster seatExpiration date (years after the date of manufacture)Frontier ClickTight booster seat9Pinnacle ClickTight9Pioneer Harness-2-Booster9Essentials Skyline booster seat10Highpoint booster seat10Midpoint10DualFit9Grow With You9 Most convertible seats made by Britax expire seven to ten years from the manufacture date. Below is a list of some of the more popular convertible models: Related reviews: Britax Advocate ClickTight review | Britax Marathon Clicktight review | Britax infant car seats review Numbers tell a story beyond the expiration The expiration dates of a convertible car seat hold answers that go beyond the numbers and into the very nature of why seats expire. If it were about the time spent in use, a convertible car seat would expire sooner than your average infant car seat. It's used way more and takes more 'abuse.' But it's not about that - it's about the natural lifespan of the materials. You probably have at least one pair of shoes that 'expired' from not being worn. The soles start to crumble after 5 or 6 years, whether you wear them or not. That's the case with some of the materials used to make an infant car seat. OK, a car seat might not crumble, but the plastic becomes brittle and would not handle the crash forces as well. It happens because sunlight reacts with the carbon in the plastic polymer and slowly breaks it down. As that happens, plastic loses some of its properties. With a bowl or a plate, it's not a big deal. But with an expired car seat, it's literally a matter of life and death. It's hard to hear, I know...but it's true. Not really, no. You might delay the deterioration by limiting sun and heat exposure, but that only applies making sure your new car seat doesn't give in before it expires. Once it hits that 6 or 7 years, retire it. ("they" being the car seat manufacturers) It's not public knowledge, but my best guess is through crash tests. Most of the stuff that gets into the safety regulations is based on crash testing. And no, it's not a way for the industry to make more money by stopping you from buying a used car seat. I'd be the first one to point fingers if I know of any shady business. As per their recommendation, discard an expired Britax car seat follow these steps: Remove all the webbing by cutting it offCut the cover of the seatBlackout the serial number and the manufacturing dateMark the seat clearly before discarding. Something like "Trash, do not use" will do. Popular Britax seats compared to each other and other top brands: Britax vs. Chicco car seats | Advocate vs. Boulevard vs. Marathon An expired car seat might "feel" fine in hand...but it's not fine, far from it. The plastic has already played its role, taken its sweet time reacting with the UV rays from the sunlight, and WILL NOT perform in a crash. An expired car seat is trash, including Britax. 1 - NHTSA - Misuse of Child Restraints (pdf) Paulo is a passionate dad who founded Wumblers to share his parenting journey with other new parents. He graduated from Concordia University and worked as a test engineer for over a decade. Paulo loves dad jokes and craft beer. Learn more about Paulo and Wumblers here.