Car seat cleaning checklist

Car seats collect crumbs, milk and the occasional carsick disaster. The rule that matters most: your car seat's manual decides how to clean it. Straps and buckles are safety parts.

Before you start

- [ ] Find the manual (most brands post it online) and read the cleaning section
- [ ] Take photos of how the cover and straps are threaded
- [ ] Vacuum crumbs out of the shell

Cover & padding

- [ ] Wash the cover only the way the manual says
- [ ] Use a mild, fragrance-free detergent
- [ ] Let the cover dry completely before refitting it

Straps & buckle

- [ ] Spot-clean straps with a cloth and mild soap, unless the manual says otherwise
- [ ] Don't machine wash, soak or bleach straps unless the manual allows it
- [ ] Clean the buckle only as the manual describes, then check it clicks and releases
- [ ] No solvents or lubricants on the harness or buckle

Putting it back

- [ ] Rethread using your photos and the manual, with no twisted straps
- [ ] Reinstall the seat and check the fit
- [ ] Vacuum the car seat area and wipe door handles
- [ ] Register the seat with the maker so you hear about recalls

Not medical advice. Follow product labels. Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222