



# A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

## *Kids in Cars*

National Child Passenger Safety Week — September 14–20, 2014

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*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Using child passenger restraints properly saves lives. Motor-vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death among children in the U.S.

Bethany West is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of properly restraining children in motor vehicles. Welcome to the show, Bethany.

[Ms. West] Thank you for having me, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Bethany, how many children are killed in motor-vehicle crashes each year?

[Ms. West] Nearly 1200 children under age 4 die in crashes every year. This means about three children die in motor vehicle crashes every single day.

[Dr. Gaynes] How many kids have been saved by being properly restrained in a car crash?

[Ms. West] Well, car seats, booster seats, and seat belts save lives and prevent injuries. In the past three and a half decades, child restraints have saved more than 10,000 kids age four and under.

[Dr. Gaynes] Until what age should children be kept in car seats?

[Ms. West] All children under age 13 should be buckled up in the back seat. Proper restraint depends on a child's age, height, and weight. Simply put, there are four steps to proper restraint. Each step is designed to give a child the best protection during a crash.

Infants and children under age two should be in rear-facing seats. Research has shown that rear-facing seats provide the best support for the head and spine during a crash. Children aged two to at least aged five should be in forward facing car seats with a harness. Children should stay in these forward-facing seats until they reach the upper height or weight limit of their seat. After this stage, children should be in booster seats until seat belts fit properly.

[Dr. Gaynes] How does one know when a seat belt fits properly in an older child?

[Ms. West] Seat belts fit properly when the seat belt lies across the upper thighs, not the stomach, and it's snug across the shoulder and chest, not the neck or face. This usually occurs when a child is between the ages of eight and 12 years old.

[Dr. Gaynes] Bethany, where can listeners get more information about child safety seats?

[Ms. West] Listeners can go to [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and, in the search box, type "child passenger safety."

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Bethany. I've been talking today with CDC's Bethany West about the importance of properly restraining children in motor vehicles.

All children under 13 should be buckled in the *back* seat. Kids under two should be in rear-facing car seats and those five and under should be in forward-facing car seats. Between ages 8 and 12, booster seats are recommended until seat belts fit properly.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.