



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Keep Young Riders Safe

Restraint Use and Motor Vehicle Occupant Death Rates Among Children Aged 0-12 Years – United States, 2002-2011

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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.

Motor vehicle-related injuries are a leading cause of death among children in the United States. Adults can prevent many of these tragedies by properly securing children in vehicles.

Dr. Erin Sauber-Schatz is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. She's joining us today to discuss ways to keep kids safe in vehicles. Welcome to the show, Erin.

[Dr. Sauber-Schatz] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Erin, how many children die each year in car crashes?

[Dr. Sauber-Schatz] In 2011, more than 650 children age 12 and under died as passengers in motor vehicle crashes. That's more than 12 children every week.

[Dr. Gaynes] How effective have safety restraints been in keeping children safe in motor vehicles?

[Dr. Sauber-Schatz] For babies, car seats have reduced the risk of death by 71 percent. For toddlers age one through four, they've reduced the risk of death by 54 percent. And it's similar for booster seats, compared with seat belts.

[Dr. Gaynes] Erin, at what point is it safe to use seats belts for children?

[Dr. Sauber-Schatz] It's important not to transfer children to seat belts too early because it might not be safe. A child can use a seat belt when it fits them properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap portion of the seat belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder portion of the seat belt lays across the chest and shoulder. It's important that the seat belt doesn't lay on the stomach, the neck, or face because this can be dangerous.

[Dr. Gaynes] Besides using safety seats and seat belts, what other tips do you have for keeping kids safe in a moving vehicle?

[Dr. Sauber-Schatz] Children age 12 and under should be properly buckled in a back seat. Also, we know that as age increases, kids are less likely to be buckled up. It's important that kids of all ages are properly buckled on every trip, no matter how short.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can parents get hands-on advice about using safety seats?

[Dr. Sauber-Schatz] There's something called a certified child passenger safety technician. These are people who have gone through a course to learn how to properly use and install car seats. Certified child passenger safety technicians can often be found at local fire stations and police departments. To find a full list of these safety technicians, listeners can go to cdc.gov and, in the search box, type "child passenger safety," then click on "Get the Facts," and at the bottom of this page, in the "More Information" box, is a link that will take you to a full list of child passenger safety technicians near you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Erin. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Erin Sauber-Schatz about keeping kids safe in motor vehicles.

Remember, all children should be buckled in vehicles with an age- and size-appropriate car seat, booster seat, or seat belt. Children 12 and under should always be in the back seat.

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 or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.