



## A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

### *Buckle Up on Every Trip*

*Click It or Ticket Campaign – May 20-June 3, 2013*

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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 crashes are among the leading causes of injury-related deaths in the U.S. Proper seat belt use is the best way to prevent serious injuries and deaths in car crashes.

Laurie Beck is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of regular seat belt use. Welcome to the show, Laurie.

[Ms. Beck] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Laurie, how many people are killed or injured in car crashes each year?

[Ms. Beck] In 2011, more than 32,000 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes, and more than three million people were treated in emergency departments for crash-related injuries.

[Dr. Gaynes] How effective are seat belts in preventing injuries and deaths?

[Ms. Beck] Seat belts reduce the risk of serious injury or death by about 50 percent. In the event of a crash, seat belts are the most effective protection a driver or passenger can have.

[Dr. Gaynes] Has seat belt use increased in recent years?

[Ms. Beck] It has. Seat belt use has increased from 80 percent in 2002 to 87 percent in 2010. Although most people now wear seat belts, there are still millions of people who are taking unnecessary risks by travelling unrestrained. Certain groups are less likely to buckle up than others. Residents of rural areas, men, teens and young adults, and nighttime travelers are some groups that have lower levels of seat belt use. Everyone should buckle up in every seat, on every trip, every time.

[Dr. Gaynes] How have state laws affected seat belt use?

[Ms. Beck] Seat belt laws in the U.S. can allow primary enforcement, meaning that police officers can pull vehicles over and issue tickets when occupants aren't buckled up, or secondary enforcement, meaning that police officers can't issue tickets for seat belt violations unless the vehicle has first been stopped for another reason. States with primary enforcement laws have higher levels of seat belt use and lower death rates than states with secondary enforcement laws. In addition, enforcement of laws plays an important role in increasing seat belt use. Intensive, well publicized enforcement campaigns are associated with higher levels of seat belt use. The

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration coordinates the ‘Click It or Ticket’ campaign every year where police agencies around the country focus on seat belt enforcement in their communities.

[Dr. Gaynes] Laurie, what’s the best way to keep children safe in a car?

[Ms. Beck] No one wants to see a child hurt in a crash. All children should be in age- and size-appropriate child restraints. We’re frequently asked when children can move into using seat belts alone. Older children should remain in belt positioning booster seats until seat belts fit them properly. A seat belt fits properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs, not the stomach, and the shoulder belt fits across the chest, not the neck. Typically, this means that children will remain in booster seats until they’re at least eight years old or four feet nine inches tall. Further, children should remain in the back seat until they’re at least 13 years old.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about proper seat belt use?

[Ms. Beck] More information is available at [cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety](http://cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety) – all one word.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Laurie. I’ve been talking today with CDC’s Laurie Beck about the importance of seat belt use.

Remember, buckle up in every seat, on every trip, every time. It could be a life or death decision.

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.