



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Sober Driving

*National Labor Day Drunk Driving Enforcement Crackdown — August 21–
September 7, 2009*

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[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.

Despite reports of senseless deaths and injuries on our nation's roads and highways, drinking and driving continues to be a deadly combination. In 2007, nearly 13,000 people were killed in a crash in which at least one driver had a blood alcohol content above the legal limit.

Dr. Ruth Shults is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control and she's joining us today to discuss the dangers of drinking and driving. Welcome to the show, Ruth.

[Dr. Shults] Thank you, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Ruth, is the number of drunk driving deaths in the U.S. increasing or decreasing?

[Dr. Shults] Over the long term, the number of drinking and driving deaths is decreasing. Currently about one in every three traffic fatalities in the United States involves a drunk driver. If we look back to the 1980s, at that point, every other traffic fatality involved a drunk driver, and it was around that time that Mothers Against Drunk Driving and other organizations helped us, as a nation, begin to see drunk driving as a serious social problem. We have made progress, but there's certainly more work to do; losing nearly 13,000 lives a year is unacceptable.

[Dr. Gaynes] Is drunk driving more common in any particular group?

[Dr. Shults] Yes. Young people, particularly men under the age of 30, are most at risk. If we look at vehicle types, motorcyclists are more at risk than drivers of other types of vehicles.

[Dr. Gaynes] Ruth, what are states and municipalities doing to address this problem?

[Dr. Shults] Every state has a set of laws to address alcohol-impaired driving, but it's really up to each community to set the standard for enforcing those laws. For example, over the Labor Day holiday in 2009, you may see more police checkpoints and roving patrols out looking for drunk drivers.

[Dr. Gaynes] What can people do to keep their friends and family members from driving while impaired?

[Dr. Shults] If you're planning a night out, know how you and your friends are going to get home before you leave, so plan ahead. And if you're hosting a party, ensure that your friends don't drink to the level of intoxication and then drive.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about the dangers of drinking and driving?

[Dr. Shults] They can go to the web at www.stopimpaireddriving.org.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks Ruth. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Ruth Shults about the dangers of drinking and driving.

Remember, if your plans include drinking, don't get behind the wheel and don't let anyone you're with get behind the wheel either.

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, 24/7.