



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Stay Awake Behind the Wheel

Drowsy Driving Prevention Week — November 6–12, 2011

Recorded: November 15, 2011; posted: November 17, 2011

[Announcer] This podcast 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.

Driving while drunk results in thousands of injuries and deaths each year, but operating a motor vehicle without adequate sleep can be just as dangerous.

Dr. Daniel Chapman is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. He's joining us today to discuss the dangers of driving while drowsy. Welcome to the show, Dan.

[Dr. Chapman] Thank you for having me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Dan, how serious is the problem of driving while drowsy?

[Dr. Chapman] It's actually quite serious. Drowsy driving was implicated in about 16 percent of fatal crashes and about 13 percent of crashes resulting in hospitalization.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some reasons that people don't get enough rest?

[Dr. Chapman] Well, we live in an increasingly electronic age where people are connected to electronic medium, television, whatnot, and we're just not getting the adequate sleep that we should.

[Dr. Gaynes] How much sleep does the average adult need each day?

[Dr. Chapman] Roughly about seven to nine hours of sleep per night. It varies from individual to individual so some people can get away with a little less; some people need a little bit more.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some strategies to help people get enough sleep?

[Dr. Chapman] Well, going to bed and getting up at the same time each day, avoiding alcohol or strenuous activity too close to bedtime, and sleeping in a cool or comfortable environment can be very helpful. But Americans are simply not getting enough rest. In fact, in a recent survey, it showed that 28 percent of people reported falling asleep behind the wheel in the past year.

[Dr. Gaynes] Dan, where can listeners get more information about driving while drowsy?

[Dr. Chapman] At our website which is www.cdc.gov/sleep.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Dan. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Daniel Chapman about the dangers of driving while drowsy.

To ensure that you're well-rested and ready to drive, establish healthy sleep practices. Maintain a regular sleep schedule; create an environment that's dark, quiet, and comfortable; and avoid strenuous activity before bedtime.

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.