

Help Your Teen Driver Stay Safe

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

Just like going to prom, learning to drive is one of life's major milestones. When it comes to your teen, make a difference by encouraging safe driving to and from prom -- and from now on. As a parent, you're a driving instructor, role model, and rule-maker. And when it comes to encouraging young driver safety, parents really matter.

The teen driving statistics are staggering. In 2005, more than 4,000 teens, ages 16 to 19, died in motor vehicle crashes, making crashes the leading cause of death for U.S. teens.

Why are teen drivers at such high risk? Overall, they lack experience on the roads and are less likely than older drivers to recognize risky situations. While lack of experience increases teens' crash risk, so does driving with other teens while unsupervised. As the number of teen passengers goes up, so does the risk of a crash.

The good news is, there are proven ways to reduce teen drivers' risks on the roads. Graduated drivers licensing systems, or GDL, and parental management can make your teen a safer driver. Remember, as a parent, you set the rules. It's up to you to decide when and where your teen can drive and who he or she can drive with.

GDL laws vary by state, but the primary goal and format are the same throughout the country.

Typically, there are three stages of GDL:

- Stage 1 is a supervised learner's period.
- Stage 2 is an intermediate license, issued once a teen passes a driving test. This license limits unsupervised driving under high-risk conditions, like driving at night or with other teen passengers.
- Stage 3- the final stage- is a full-privilege drivers license.

For more information on GDL, including what the laws are in your state, visit www.cdc.gov/ncipc. And remember the impact you can have as a parent, during prom season and throughout the year.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.