



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Guiding Teen Drivers

National Teen Driver Safety Week — October 16–22, 2016

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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 the leading cause of death among teens. Parents have a big influence on young drivers and can help them reduce their risk for being involved in a crash.

Amy Jewett is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. She's joining us today to discuss what parents can do to help keep young drivers safer on the road. Welcome to the show, Amy.

[Ms. Jewett] Thank you for having me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Amy, how many teens are killed or injured in motor-vehicle crashes in the U.S. each year?

[Ms. Jewett] Over 2200 teens between the ages of 16 and 19 are killed every year in the U.S. And over 200,000 were treated in emergency departments for injuries suffered by motor vehicle crashes. You know, for the past decade, motor vehicle fatalities have been decreasing. However, last year, in 2015, we saw an increase and we're still trying to figure out why.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some of the reasons for fatal crashes among young drivers?

[Ms. Jewett] Driver inexperience is the leading cause of fatal crashes. New drivers just underestimate or are unable to identify dangerous situations.

[Dr. Gaynes] Do some driving situations put teens at more risk than others?

[Ms. Jewett] Absolutely. So, the presence of teen passengers (the more passengers, the higher the risk), nighttime driving, not wearing a seatbelt, using alcohol, speeding, and distractions all contribute to that risk.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some proven methods that help teens become safer drivers?

[Ms. Jewett] Graduated driver licensing programs are available in each state. These programs require that teens practice longer, that there's more parental involvement, and they limit those high risk conditions. The graduated driver licensing laws do vary among states, but the most comprehensive laws are the most effective.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, how can parents encourage their teens to be safer drivers?

[Ms. Jewett] Parents are very important. They should model safe driving behavior and set clear rules and expectations by using a parent-teen driving agreement.

[Dr. Gaynes] Amy, where can listeners get more information about teen driving?

[Ms. Jewett] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/parentsarethekey, all one word.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Amy. I've been talking today with CDC's Amy Jewett about safe driving for teens. Parents—model safe driving habits, make sure your teen always wears a seatbelt, and practice driving together frequently. Write your expectations and limits in a parent-teen driving agreement and monitor and reinforce your rules.

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.