



What Teen Drivers Need To Know

(NAPSA)—By improving their driving skills, teen drivers can reduce their risk of spinal cord injuries.

According to the experts at Shriners Hospitals for Children®, motor vehicle crashes are the No. one cause of death for those between the ages of 16 and 24. Motor vehicle crashes are also the leading cause of spinal cord injuries in all age groups.

Being aware of the risk factors and improving driving skills may help reduce this risk—especially for young drivers. Factors that contribute to crashes include driver inexperience, distractions, speeding, peer pressure, driving with other teens in the car, and the use of alcohol and illegal drugs.

Tips for Safe Driving:

- Give driving your full attention. Driving is a privilege.
- Follow the rules of the road and obey speed limits.
- Always wear a seat belt.
- If transporting younger passengers, properly restrain children under age 12 in the backseat, and place children in age- and height- and weight-appropriate safety or booster seats.
- Avoid distractions unrelated to driving. Distractions include texting or reading, talking on the phone—including using a headset, earpiece or speakerphone—eating, fatigue, arguing, an animal that is loose in the car, disruptive passengers, alcohol or other drugs, and loud music.
- Never get behind the wheel after drinking alcohol. Even a single drink, whether you can feel it or not, can affect your judgment enough to cause a crash.



Talking on the phone—including using an earpiece or speakerphone—can be distracting while driving.

- Be aware of the side effects of prescription medications before driving.
- Use your side and rearview mirrors every five to seven seconds.
- Never write, read or send text messages while driving. Thousands of fatal accidents have been linked to distractions like texting.
- Always have a safety zone or safety hole: a space to your left or right to drive into during an emergency.

For more information on safer driving, you can visit www.shrinershospitalsforchildren.org.

Shriners Hospitals for Children is one of the world's largest pediatric subspecialty health care systems, helping thousands of kids every day. The health care system's spinal cord injury rehabilitation program is well recognized nationally and internationally. The hospitals change lives every day through innovative pediatric specialty care. You can donate by going to www.donate2SHC.org.