



Pedestrian Safety for Children

Walking and playing near roadways can be dangerous for children. As cars speed down busy streets or distracted drivers are not paying attention to pedestrians, many children and teens are at risk for injury. "It can be hard for kids to judge how fast a car is going on the road or how far away it is," explains Deb Carpenter, Childhood Injury Prevention Coordinator at Bronson Children's Hospital.

According to [Safe Kids Worldwide](#), "Unintentional pedestrian injuries are the fifth leading cause of injury-related deaths in the United States for children ages five to 19."¹ Teens between the ages 12 and 19 are most vulnerable for injuries while walking.¹ Each hour, a teen is injured or killed after being hit by a car in the U.S. And the death rates from walking related injuries are 50 percent higher for boys than girls.²

There are many driving behaviors that pose danger to children who are walking near roads, like:

- Driving too fast
- Not paying attention to changes in speed limits
- Being on your cell phone or distracted behind the wheel

More than one in 10 drivers are distracted by mobile devices, and three percent of distracted drivers were using more than one mobile device at the same time, like wearing headphones while texting.

During the back to school rush in September, there tends to be a higher number of kids being hit by cars than any other time of year. Overall, injuries tend to be higher in the months when school starts and ends (August, September and June).¹

"One of the most important steps you can take as a parent is to talk to your children about how to be safe near roads," says Carpenter. It's important to teach kids these safety tips for walking near roads:

- Make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street.
- Put your cell phone down and remove headphones when crossing the street.
- Walk on sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far away from vehicles as possible.
- Children under age 10 should always cross the street with an adult.

For drivers, it's important to remember the following tips to keep children safe:

- Be aware of pedestrians in school zones.
- Look for the warning signs to reduce speed flashing lights and/or speed bumps.
- A small decrease in speed can significantly decrease the risk for people walking.

This article is brought to you by Bronson Children's Hospital, southwest Michigan's only children's hospital. For more information about children's health, visit bronsonhealth.com/services/children.

¹Safe Kids Worldwide Walking Tips: <https://www.safekids.org/walkingsafelytips>

²Safe Kids Worldwide Pedestrian Safety Fact Sheet:

https://www.safekids.org/sites/default/files/documents/pedestrian_safety_fact_sheet_2016.pdf