

### TEST YOUR SAFETY I.Q.

**Q** What is the leading cause of death for people 1-24?

**A** *Motor Vehicle Crashes – In 2001 alone, 42,900 people were killed in motor vehicle accidents.*<sup>1</sup>

**Q** How could nearly 50% of these deaths have been prevented?

**A** *Buckling Up – Safety belts are 45% effective in preventing deaths and can reduce the risk of moderate to severe injury by 50%.*<sup>2</sup>

## ThinkFirst about...

### DEATH AND INJURY STATISTICS

- 1 out of 244 people will die as a car occupant in their lifetime.<sup>3</sup>
- 86% of fatality victims are occupants, 14% are pedestrians, bicyclists, and others.<sup>4</sup>
- Safety belt use has increased to a national rate of 73%, resulting in the prevention of many injuries.<sup>5</sup>
- Between the years of 1975 and 2001, safety belts saved an estimated 147,246 lives.<sup>6</sup>
- In the year 2001 alone, safety belts prevented 12,144 deaths.<sup>7</sup>
- An average of 115 people died each day in motor vehicle crashes in 2001.<sup>8</sup>
- In the year 2001, 39% of passenger car occupants involved in fatal crashes were unrestrained.<sup>9</sup> An additional 9,167 deaths could have been prevented by the use of restraints.<sup>10</sup>
- In the year 2001, 3,033,000 people were injured in traffic crashes.<sup>11</sup>
- Air bags are designed to be used *with* seat belts. By themselves, they are only 12% effective in reducing deaths.<sup>12</sup>

### WHEN AND WHERE INJURIES ARE MOST LIKELY TO OCCUR

- The highest numbers of fatal crashes occur on Christmas Day and Thanksgiving Day.<sup>13</sup>
- 60% of crashes occur on roads with posted speed limits of 40 mph or less.<sup>14</sup>
- 75% of motor vehicle crashes occur within 25 miles of home.<sup>15</sup>
- Rural areas have higher motor vehicle crash incidence rates and death rates than urban areas.<sup>16</sup>

### WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO INCUR THIS TYPE OF INJURY?

- Two out of five deaths among teens in the United States are a result of a motor vehicle crash.<sup>17</sup>
- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children from 4 to 14 years of age.<sup>18</sup>
- In the year 2000, the fatal crash involvement rate per 100,000 population was almost 3 times as high for male drivers as for females.<sup>19</sup>

### HEALTH COSTS

- The total annual cost of motor vehicle occupant-related death and injury exceeds \$11 billion for all children ages 14 and under.<sup>20</sup>
- Every dollar spent on a child safety seat saves the United States \$32.<sup>21</sup>
- Hospital costs for an unbelted crash victim are 55% higher than for a belted victim. The average American pays about \$580 per year towards these costs. These payments are in the form of higher taxes, higher healthcare costs, and increased insurance premiums.<sup>22</sup>

# ThinkFirst about...

## PREVENTION TIPS

- Wear your safety belt during every ride.
  - Lap belt – should fit snugly and be worn low across the hips and pelvis.
  - Shoulder belt – should fit snugly and cross the chest and collarbone.
  - Seat should be in an upright position.<sup>23</sup>
- Children under 12 should be buckled up in the back seat.<sup>24</sup>
- Damaged seat belts are not suitable protection. Look for signs of damage such as:
  - Fading
  - Fraying
  - Tears
  - Loss of Flexibility<sup>25</sup>

## STILL NOT CONVINCED?

Traffic collisions result in a death every 12 minutes and a disabling injury every 14 seconds.<sup>26</sup> This means in the short time it has taken you to read this, about 15 people have been severely injured, if not killed as a result of a car crash. Don't let this happen to you or someone you know. Remember, the brief second it takes to buckle up could save your life! Don't become a statistic – BUCKLE UP!

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#### SOURCES:

<sup>1, 2, 26</sup> <http://www.nsc.org/library/rept2000.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [www.nsc.org/lrs/statinfo/odds.htm](http://www.nsc.org/lrs/statinfo/odds.htm)

<sup>4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 19</sup> [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) Traffic Safety Facts 2001

<sup>12</sup> [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/airbags/buckleplan/seatbelt805/police.html](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/airbags/buckleplan/seatbelt805/police.html)

<sup>13</sup> [www.madd.org/stats/0,1056,4906,00.html](http://www.madd.org/stats/0,1056,4906,00.html)

<sup>14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 24</sup> [www.safekids.org/tier3\\_cd.cfm?content\\_item\\_id=1133&folder\\_id=540](http://www.safekids.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=1133&folder_id=540)

<sup>17</sup> CDC Injury Fact Book 2001-2002

<sup>18</sup> [www.madd.org/stats/0,1056,4567,00.html](http://www.madd.org/stats/0,1056,4567,00.html)

<sup>22</sup> [www.espineonline.com/seatbelt.html](http://www.espineonline.com/seatbelt.html)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.actsinc.org/safetybelts.cfm>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.ltsa.govt.nz/factsheets/30.html>