



Government of South Australia

Children, Youth and Women's
Health Service

KIDSAFE LOGO

MEDIA RELEASE

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Appropriate vehicle child restraints reduce injuries, but accidents still too common

The safety of child passengers in cars is dramatically improved by having properly fitted age- and size-appropriate child car seat restraints, according to the Children, Youth and Women's Health Service (CYWHS) and Kidsafe SA.

This month - **National Spinal Cord Injuries Month** - the CYWHS and Kidsafe SA have joined forces to urge parents to make sure their children are secured with a restraint that is size appropriate and properly fitted.

"Motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of death and serious injury to children in Australia," Helen Noblet, Executive Officer, Kidsafe SA said. "Child restraints, properly fitted and used, have been shown to dramatically improve the safety of child passengers."

Research also suggests that in the event of all types of crashes other than rear-end crashes, which represent only five per cent of fatal crashes, children travelling in the back seat of a motor vehicle are less likely to sustain a serious injury than front seat passengers.

Head of Paediatric Emergency Dr Jeremy Raftos said the CYWHS strongly supported the need for all child passengers in motor vehicles to have weight and size appropriate restraints. "Where possible, children under nine years of age should travel in an appropriate restraint in the rear seat of the vehicle," he said.

While child restraints can make a major difference to the outcome of accidents, Dr Raftos stressed the importance of road safety in keeping our children safe. "We see around one spinal cord injury or vertebral fracture each month and about half are vehicle related," he said. "In the last financial year two children hit by cars received spinal cord or vertebral injuries."

"We need to send a strong message to vehicle drivers to remain alert at all times and remember to check mirrors and blind spots regularly, particularly during school holidays when there are more children about. Fatigued drivers need to stop for regular rests in order to remain alert and aware of their surroundings at all times."

Kidsafe is the leading non-government, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the prevention of unintentional childhood injuries and provides an information service for parents and carers of children on all aspects of child safety and injury prevention.

The Children, Youth and Women's Health Service works to promote, maintain and restore the health of children, young people and women.

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