

# **Kids are unpredictable. INJURIES DON'T HAVE TO BE.**

## **A step ahead... of traffic injuries**

Tips to keep your 5 – 9 year old safe.

### **Being hit by a motor vehicle is a main cause of death for children 1–14 years old**

#### **Traffic injuries are more likely to occur:**

- Close to home
- Near main roads
- In the summer months, between 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

#### **Who is most at risk?**

- Children between 5–9 years of age
- Boys are injured nearly twice as often as girls

### **What you can do**

## **1 Learn how injuries can occur**

#### **Children 5–9 years of age:**

- Are smaller and may not see or be seen by traffic, especially around parked vehicles.
- Have not developed the ability to make safe decisions about traffic because they:
  - Have difficulty deciding how fast a vehicle is approaching and whether they have time to cross safely.
  - Are impulsive, have trouble waiting for lights and may run out onto the road suddenly.
  - Have limited vision out of the corners of their eyes and may not see the vehicle approaching until it is too close to cross safely.
  - Assume that if they see a vehicle that the driver sees them too.
  - Have trouble knowing the direction of sounds such as sirens or vehicle horns.

## **2 Create safer places for children**

- Go to the park or a safe space away from traffic to play with your child.
- Report road safety problems such as sidewalks with cracks, broken street lights, or overhead crossing lights, to your local municipality or city.
- Choose brighter clothes for children to wear and consider adding reflective patches to clothing.
- Place portable basketball nets on the driveway or yard – nets should not be used on the road. Children cannot concentrate on the game and be aware of traffic at the same time. ➤



- Work with local government officials (such as your city councillor) to create safer walking and play spaces for children.
- Call your local police department if traffic in your neighborhood is too fast. Slower moving traffic prevents some injuries from occurring and gives children a better chance of surviving a collision.

# 3

## Watch children closely

### Parents and caregivers:

- Know where your children are playing at all times and that they are being supervised.
- Always cross the road with children who are 9 years of age or less. Young children do not have the ability to be aware of traffic. Even older children may need to practise crossing the road safely.
- Follow the safety rules when you are crossing the road. Children learn by watching adults.

# 4

## Create and follow family safety rules

### Teach children to:

- Always cross the street with an adult if they are 9 years of age or less.
- Play in safe spaces away from traffic.
- Walk in pairs or groups to and from school.
- Obey crossing guards and school bus drivers.
- Walk on the part of the sidewalk furthest away from the curb.
- Walk facing traffic when there are no sidewalks.
- Cross only at corners, where there are traffic lights, or stop signs. Never cross in the middle of a block.

- Remove head phones when walking or playing near the road. These decrease a child's ability to hear what is going on around them.
- Stay off snow banks which can collapse and send a child onto the street unexpectedly.
- Watch for vehicles coming out of driveways and lanes. Children should stop and make eye contact with the driver before moving past the vehicle.
- Know that white lights on the back of a vehicle and/or a beeping sound, mean the vehicle is backing up.

### Skills children should practise when crossing at a crosswalk or traffic signal:

- Stop.
- Activate the overhead lights. When at an intersection with a signal, push the button and wait for the pedestrian walk signal.
- Look both ways.
- Listen for traffic.
- Indicate intent to cross by sticking your arm out.
- Wait for all traffic to stop before crossing.
- Make eye contact with the drivers.
- Cross at the beginning of the green light. Do NOT start to cross once the light turns yellow or the hand is flashing. Never cross on a red light.
- Walk across and watch for turning vehicles.

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For more information:  
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