

# What Parents Say Matters

## Tips to Keep Tweens Safe



Car crashes are a leading cause of deaths and injuries among New York State tweens (8-12 year olds). Most tweens seriously injured or killed in crashes were not using seat belts. They are also more likely to get hurt in a crash when riding in the front seat, even if buckled up.

Tips to keep tweens safe in the car:

- **Require seat belts be used every time – no exceptions.** Most crashes happen close to home.
- **Make it clear that not buckling up is not an option.** Tween survey results indicate that parents have the most influence in getting them to buckle up. If your tween resists wearing seatbelts, tell him/her that their safety depends upon their use and it's the law.
- **Remind tweens to buckle up when riding with other drivers.**
- **Wait until everyone is buckled up before driving.**
- **Make sure seat belts fit properly.** The lap belt should be snug and low across the upper thighs/hips. The shoulder belt should cross the chest and collarbone. Your child should be tall enough to sit against the vehicle seat back with his/her legs bent over the edge of the seat without slouching.

- **Make sure the vehicle seat back is upright.** Seat belts will not work properly if the seat back is reclined or your child is slouching in the seat.
- **Never let your tween put the shoulder belt behind the back or under the arm.** Serious injuries can occur in a crash. If the seat belt doesn't fit properly, your child may need to use an approved booster seat.
- **Keep tweens in the back seat.** To encourage your tween to sit in the back seat
  - Let them pick the radio stations and/or play electronic games.
  - Have them store their belongings in the back seat
- **Tweens should only ride with adult drivers.** Teen drivers are more likely to be involved in a crash and let tweens sit in the front seat. They are less likely to require everyone to buckle up.

For more information about keeping your child safe in the car, visit the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee web site at [www.safeny.com](http://www.safeny.com).

Funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) with a grant from the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee



State of New York  
Department of Health