

Speed a factor in one-third of deadly crashes involving teen drivers

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Report includes tips for parents to promote safer driving.

(HealthDay)—Speeding is a factor in a third of fatal crashes involving teen drivers in the United States, according to a new report.

Speeding played a role in 33 percent (nearly 19,500) of fatal teen driver crashes in 2011, compared with 30 percent in 2000. During that same period, there was a dramatic decline in the total number of fatal teen driver crashes, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) report.

"Curbing teen speeding is vital since no other age group has a higher [crash risk](#)," report author Susan Ferguson said in a GHSA news release. "Speeding is a common factor in the [fatal crashes](#) of teen male and female drivers."

"Speeding is more prevalent among teen males, at night and in the

presence of other teen passengers," she said. "When three or more teen passengers are in a vehicle driven by a 16-year-old male, almost half of their fatal crashes are speeding-related."

Despite its significant role in fatal teen driver crashes, speeding doesn't get the attention it deserves, the researchers said. Increased speed limits in many states and the general belief that speeding is acceptable worsen the problem.

"Unless speeding is recognized as a dangerous behavior, much the same as drunk driving, addressing it will be difficult," said Ferguson, former senior vice president of research for the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Potential solutions in the report included wider use of graduated driver licensing laws that place nighttime and passenger restrictions on newly licensed drivers. These rules help limit situations in which [teen drivers](#) are likely to speed.

Parents play an important role in teens' driving behavior. The report offered the following tips for parents:

- Talk to teens about the importance of observing all traffic laws, demonstrate by example and establish family rules and consequences for breaking laws.
- Do not give teens primary access to a vehicle for at least the first year of independent driving.
- When selecting a car, make safety the primary consideration.
- Consider in-vehicle speed monitoring devices and participation in incentive-based insurance programs that monitor usage, braking and acceleration, and speed.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention has more about [teen drivers](#).

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