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KIDS AND CARS

Most parents these days are pretty savvy about the importance of using approved child car seats and always buckle their children in. Some parents are less likely to buckle up themselves or insist that every other adult in the car be restrained.

Listen up if you are one of those parents who drives unrestrained. In a crash your correctly restrained child could be killed if struck by another occupant of the car who was catapulted forward, backwards, or sideways by the force of the crash. I have in front of me a study published in JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) that found evidence that risk of death in a crash is associated with the restraint use of other occupants in the car. The death risk is lowest when all other occupants of the vehicle are restrained.

Don't take a chance. When you buckle your child up remind yourself that no car should be started until EVERYONE in the car is buckled up, including you.

While I'm on the subject of kids and cars, let me call another study to your attention. This study of government statistics was done by MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). The vast majority of children killed by drunk drivers are in vehicles, they are not pedestrians or cyclists. 68% of children who died in alcohol-related crashes were in cars where the driver had measurable levels of alcohol in the blood and about 75% of these children were in a car with a driver whose blood alcohol level was over 0.08 % so they were at the mercy of an impaired, drunk driver.

Sadly, often the driver is a parent of the child. MADD argues that drunken driving with a child in the car

constitutes a form of child abuse. I agree.

Do not let your child get in a car with an impaired driver, even if the driver is your spouse. Also do not permit your child to drive with a non-relative such as a neighbor if you suspect that person has a drinking problem.