

## **Injury**

(Seat Belt Use, Drinking and Driving)

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among 15- to 20-year-olds, particularly among males.<sup>1</sup> Lack of driving experience and a tendency to take risks are the two main reasons why this age group may be more vulnerable. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety states that teenagers are less likely to wear safety belts and belt use among male teens was significantly less than among females.

Driving while drunk is a serious offense with significant legal and financial consequences. Reducing drinking and driving or riding with someone who has been drinking alcohol can help reduce the number of motor vehicle crashes among teens.

- Lap/shoulder safety belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent.<sup>1</sup>
- Motor vehicle occupants 10 to 24 years old involved in fatal crashes have the lowest restraint use rate. Increasing the use of automobile and safety restraint systems to 85 percent could save an estimated 10,000 American lives per year.<sup>2</sup>
- Alcohol-related traffic crashes can cause serious injury, permanent disability and death. They rank as the leading cause of spinal cord injury among adolescents and young adults.<sup>3</sup>
- Motor vehicle crash injuries, approximately 30 percent of which involve alcohol, are the leading cause of death among youth 15 to 24 years of age in the United States.<sup>4, 5</sup>

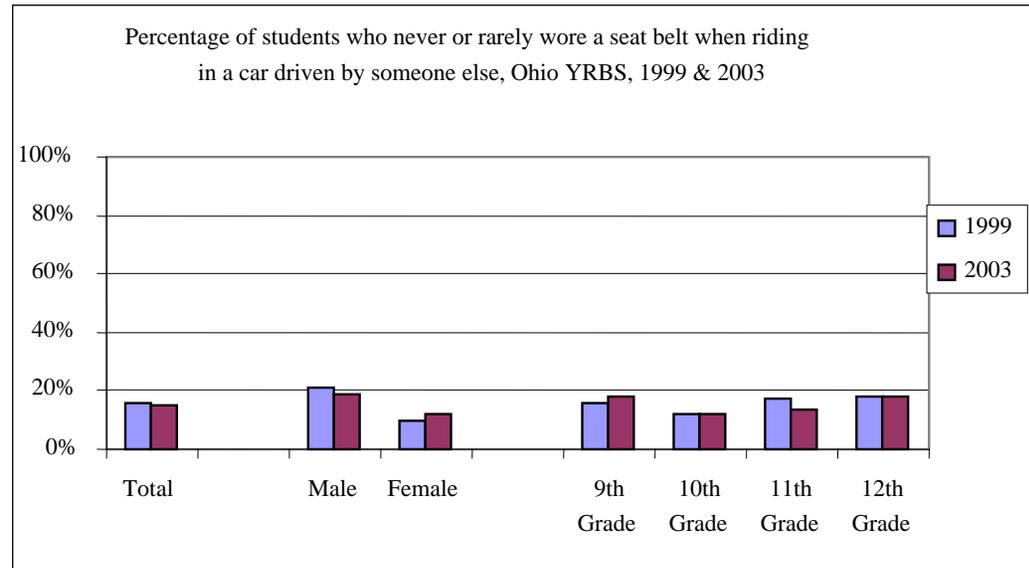
### **HP 2010 Objectives:**

- 16-3: Reduce deaths of adolescents and young adults to no more than 16.8 per 100,000 10 to 14-year-olds, 39.8 per 100,000 15-19-year-olds and 49.0 per 100,000 20 to 24-year-olds.
- 15-15: Reduce deaths caused by motor vehicle crashes to no more than 9.2 per 100,000 people and no more than 0.8 per million vehicle miles traveled.
- 15-19: Increase use of safety belts to 92 percent.
- 26-01a: Reduce deaths caused by alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes to no more than four per 100,000 people.
- 26-01b: Reduce injuries caused by alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes to no more than 65 per 100,000 people.
- 26-06: Reduce the proportion of adolescents who report that they rode, during the previous 30 days, with a driver who had been drinking alcohol to no more than 30 percent.

• **Injury: Seat Belt Usage--Passenger**

**Q8 How often do you wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else?**

- **Most students wear seat belts when riding in a car driven by someone else.**
  - In 2003, 15 percent of students report never or rarely wearing a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else.
  - There are no significant differences in seat belt usage between males and females or by grade level.
- **There are no significant differences in seat belt usage between 1999 and 2003.**



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- **Injury: Seat Belt Usage--Driver**

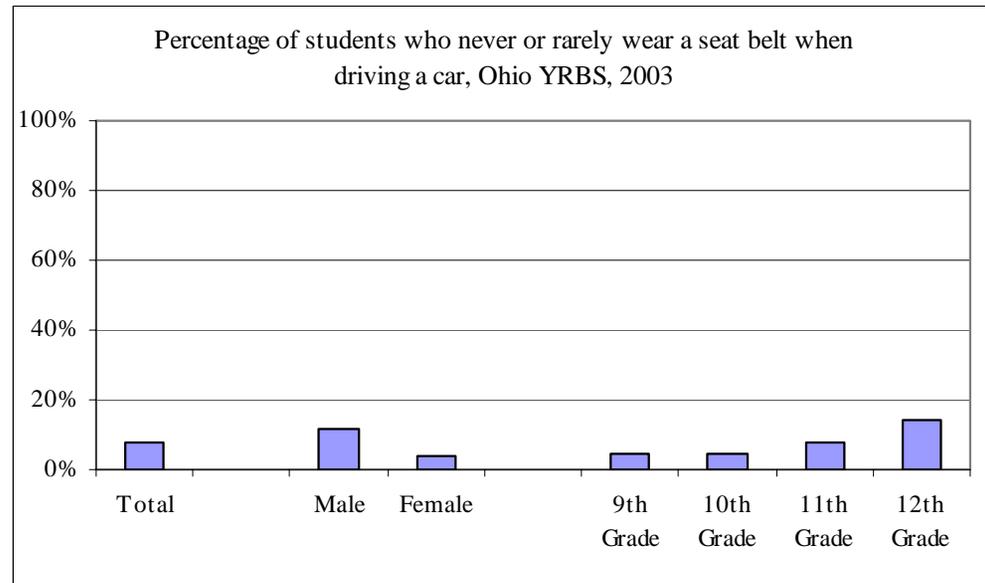
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**Q9 How often do you wear a seat belt when driving a car?**

- **Most students wear seat belts when driving a car.**

- In 2003, 7.6 percent of students report never or rarely wearing a seat belt when driving a car.
- Significantly more males (12 percent) than females (4.0 percent) report never or rarely wearing a seat belt when driving a car.
- There are no significant differences in seat belt usage when driving a car by grade level; however, ninth graders are less likely to be of driving age.

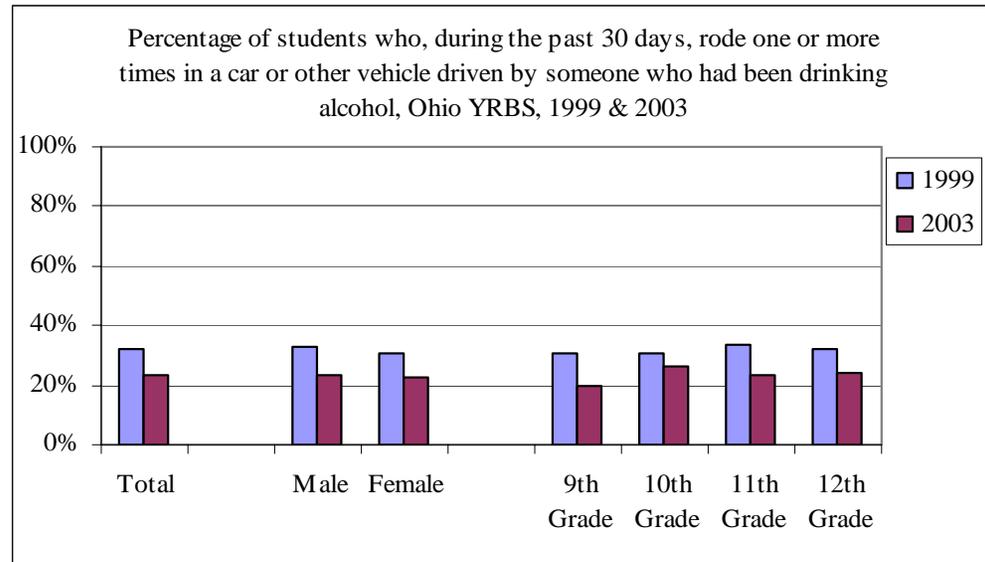
- **This question was not asked in 1999.**



## • Injury: Drinking & Driving--Passenger

**Q10 During the past 30 days, how many times did you ride in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol?**

- **Most students do not ride with drivers who have been drinking.**
  - In 2003, 23 percent of students report that in the last 30 days they rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol.
  - There are no significant differences in riding with a driver who had been drinking alcohol between males and females or by grade level.
- **Significantly fewer students report riding with a driver who had been drinking alcohol in 2003 (23 percent) than in 1999 (32 percent).**
  - This difference is significant for both males and females but not by grade level.



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- **Injury: Drinking & Driving--Driver**

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**Q11 During the past 30 days, how many times did you drive a car or other vehicle when you had been drinking alcohol?**

- **Most students do not drive after drinking alcohol.**

- In 2003, 10 percent of students report driving a car in the past 30 days one or more times when they had been drinking alcohol.
- Students in 11<sup>th</sup> (12 percent) and 12<sup>th</sup> (16 percent) grades are more likely than students in ninth (3.7 percent) grade to report they had driven after drinking alcohol; however, ninth graders are less likely to be of driving age.
- There are no significant differences in driving after drinking alcohol between males and females.

- **Significantly fewer students report driving after drinking in 2003 (10 percent) than 1999 (17 percent).**

- This difference is significant for males, but not for females or by grade level.

