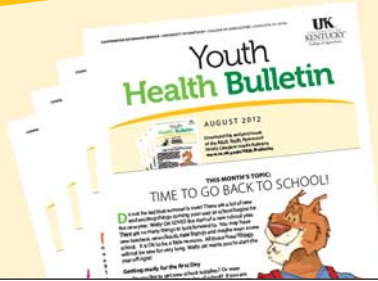


# Youth Health Bulletin



MAY 2015

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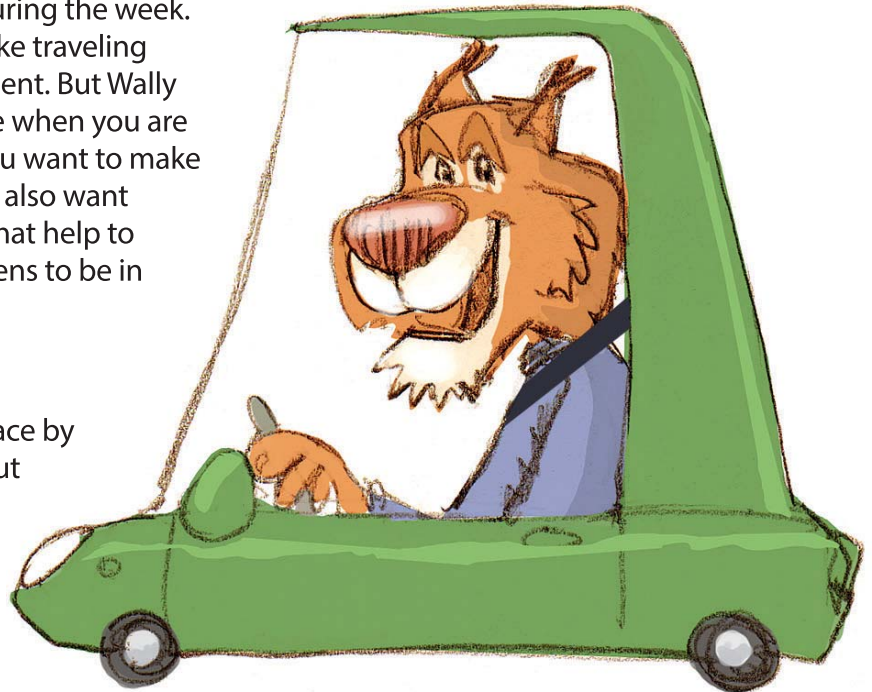
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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: CAR SAFETY

**M**ost kids spend some time in the car during the week. Do you? Wally Cat knows that cars make traveling from place to place faster and more convenient. But Wally Cat also knows that it is important to be safe when you are traveling in a car. When you are in the car you want to make sure that you are wearing your seatbelt. You also want to know about safety features like air bags that help to protect you if the car you are riding in happens to be in an accident.

### Seatbelts

When you are traveling from place to place by car, as soon as you are settled in your seat put on your seatbelt. You should wear your seatbelt every time you are in the car — whether it is a 5-minute ride or a 5-hour trip. Even if you are in the car to go right around the corner, it is important to always buckle your seatbelt.



Continued on the back →

# Seatbelts are important because they protect you if the car you are traveling in happens to be in an accident.

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There are different types of seatbelts. Most seatbelts have two parts: a strap that goes across your shoulder and a lap belt that sits across your lap. In some cars, the two pieces are all part of one buckle and it needs to be snapped by hand. In other cars, there could be an automatic strap that goes across your shoulder, but you still need to make sure the lap strap is fastened by hand. There are also some cars that might just have a lap belt. Just remember, you should make sure that all buckles are snapped into place *before* the car starts moving.

Seatbelts are important because they protect you if the car you are traveling in happens to be in an accident. A seatbelt keeps you in your seat. If a person is not wearing a seatbelt and the car is in an accident, he or she may be tossed around the car and could get seriously injured.

Even if you are in a friend's car or with another family member, you still need to wear a seatbelt. If you are riding with a friend, a seatbelt is something that should not be shared. Buckling up together may seem like a lot of fun, but you could both get very hurt if there was a car accident.

### How do you know if you are wearing a seatbelt the right way?

The lap part of the seatbelt should rest across your hips. This is pretty low. It should not be going across the upper part of your belly. The shoulder strap should go across your chest and shoulder. The shoulder strap should not go under your arm or across your neck. If your seatbelt strap is uncomfortable, talk to the adult with you in the car about where it is bothering you and see if you can fix the problem.

### What is an air bag?

Have you ever heard a commercial where the person is talking about an air bag? Have you ever wondered what an air bag is? An air bag is a large bag that bursts out of certain spots in the car when there is an accident. If an accident happens, the



air bag releases very quickly to protect the people inside the car. The air bag keeps the people inside the car from hitting the dashboard or the windshield.

Air bags are an important way to help people from getting hurt when in an accident, but they do not replace the use of a seatbelt. Wearing a seatbelt is the most important safety step you can take while riding in a car.

Although air bags are important to keep people safe when driving, children under the age of 12 should not sit in the front seat. Air bags are made to help protect adults only. In fact, air bags can hurt children if they are in the front seat when an air bag is released.

Wally Cat wants you to be safe. Being safe when you are riding in a car is very important. The ways that you can stay safe include always wearing your seatbelt, not sharing your seatbelt and staying in the backseat until you are at least 12 years old.

#### SOURCE:

Kidshealth. (2011). Staying safe in the car and on the bus  
Parents Central: From car seats to car keys; Keeping Kids Safe.  
<http://www.safercar.gov/parents/home.htm>

Youth  
Health Bulletin

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