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LSU-MCLNO Trauma Center Reminds Parents of Importance of Booster Seats

Trauma Team Focuses on Child Passenger Safety

09-06-06— Every year children suffer needless injury. Children ages 4 to 8 who use booster seats are 59 percent less likely to be injured in a car crash than children who are restrained only by a safety belt, according to a study by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). According to NHTSA, motor vehicle traffic crashes were the leading cause of death for every age 3 through 33.

A positive relationship between drivers using safety belts and children being restrained shows 92 percent of the children who were transported by belted drivers were restrained compared to only 62 percent of the children transported by unbelted drivers.

That's why the LSU - MCLNO Trauma Center is joining with local agencies to promote booster seat usage for children 40 – 80 pounds, under 4'9". The primary goal is to remind all parents and other adults responsible for children traveling in motor vehicles -- if the kids are under 4'9" tall, they need to be in a booster seat. Only an estimated 10 percent to 20 percent of children ages 4 to 8 use booster seats.

Bridget Gardner RN, Injury Prevention Coordinator, said that as children grow, how they sit safely in a car, truck, van or SUV changes. For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers simply need to remember and follow the **4 Steps for Kids**:

1. Use rear-facing infant seats in the back seat from birth to at least one year of age and at least 20 pounds;
2. Use forward-facing toddler seats in the back seat from age one and 20 pounds to about age four and 40 pounds;
3. Use booster seats in the back seat from about age four to at least age eight—unless the child is 4' 9" or taller; and
4. Use safety belts in the back seat at age eight or older or taller than 4' 9".

It is imperative to remember all children under age 13 should ride in the back seat.

“Many parents are under the false impression that children who have outgrown child safety seats can move right into regular safety belts, but nothing could be further from the truth,” said Bridget Gardner RN, Injury Prevention Program Coordinator. “As eye witnesses to the emotional and physical tragedy caused by being improperly restrained or unrestrained, the Trauma Team is working hard to remind all parents, grandparents, and child care providers to use a booster seat to raise their kids to the right height in the car. If they’re under 4’9” tall, put them in a booster seat.” Booster seats allow the lap shoulder belt in the vehicle to cross the hard bones of the child’s body, thus decreasing and almost eliminating head, spine and internal injuries.

As part of our commitment to saving lives, the Trauma Team of LSU- MCLNO Trauma Center will host a free booster seat giveaway. In addition, all booster seats will be installed by a Nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician. To qualify, you must meet the following criteria:

1. **Must call to schedule an appointment 736-5152**
2. Child must be present at event for proper installation
3. Lap / shoulder belts must be available in a rear position in the vehicle
4. Child is 40-80 pounds, under 4’9.

Event: Saturday, September 16, 2006
10am – 2pm
LSU - MCLNO Trauma Center
1221 South Clearview Parkway