

Teens and Driving Safety

By Amy Bentley



Dr. Alexandra Roche
CHOC Pediatrician

Dr. Roche, a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, is on staff at the CHOC Primary Care Clinic in Orange. Dr. Roche completed her residency at CHOC. She focuses much of her patient practice on obesity and eating disorders in adolescents.

Dr. Roche's philosophy of care: "I think every child has the potential to be a stellar human being and I want to help them reach their potential in any way I can."

EDUCATION:

New York Medical College
in New York

BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:

Pediatrics

About 2,650

OF TEENS AGES 16-19
KILLED IN THE U.S. IN 2011 IN
MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES



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ONLY 55%

OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
SAID THEY ALWAYS WEAR
A SEATBELT WHEN DRIVING
WITH SOMEONE ELSE (2013).

IS YOUR TEEN READY TO DRIVE?

"Even if you have a very responsible teen, the fact that they don't have experience driving makes them a bigger risk. Driving is dangerous for all teens, and parents can require them to prove they are ready," says CHOC pediatrician Dr. Alexandra Roche. She suggests a teen is ready to drive when he or she agrees to participate in a driving safety contract, is maintaining good grades at school, and has proven to be responsible with things like chores, a pet and school tasks such as planning a project.

DISTRACTED DRIVING

"Many things can cause teens to be distracted, like loud music, cell phones, eating in the car and having others in the car. The risk of having an accident is much greater when passengers are in the car," says Dr. Roche. Limiting distractions and being prepared help keep young drivers more safe, says Dr. Roche. "Make sure you have everything ready for your



trip before getting in the car. Know where you are going and how to get there before leaving. Know where your money, driver's license and other important items are, and put your phone on silent. And make sure that seatbelt has clicked."

TEENS AT RISK

Dr. Roche says research has found the risk of a car crash is higher among teens ages 16-19 than any other age group. "Other high-risk situations include driving on the weekends as well as the evenings," she says. "It's important for parents to review safe driving tips with their teens multiple times. It helps for teens to take a safe-driving course beyond the required driver's education. Young drivers should always anticipate unexpected situations and learn to drive defensively. You may control your car but you can't control other drivers on the road."

37%

OF MALE DRIVERS AGES
15-20 WHO WERE INVOLVED
IN FATAL CRASHES IN 2012
WERE SPEEDING AT THE
TIME; ABOUT 25 % HAD
BEEN DRINKING



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