

Adult Health Bulletin



APRIL 2015

Download this and past issues
of the Adult, Youth, Parent and
Family Caregiver Health Bulletins:
[http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/
content/health-bulletins](http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/health-bulletins)

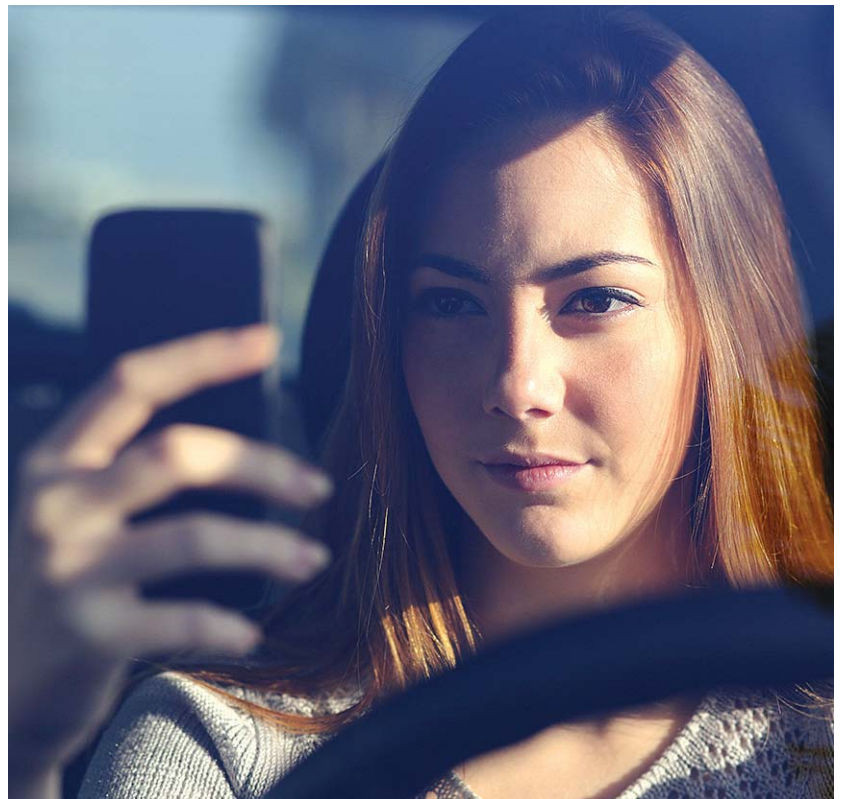
Reprinted by:
K-State Research & Extension
Atchison County Office
405 Main/PO Box 109
Effingham, KS 66023
913-833-5450

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: DISTRACTED DRIVING

It is estimated that one in four car crashes involve cell phone use. There are many myths regarding cell phone use and driving. Many people know that using cell phones to text while driving is dangerous, but many underestimate the danger that is still present when using the cell phone for a conversation while driving.

MYTH 1: A person driving a car can multitask.

Multitasking seems like an everyday occurrence. Many people think that not only can they multitask, but they are good at it. But the truth is, people are not really good at multitasking when both tasks require *thinking*. Both driving and talking are complex activities that require many areas of the brain to be working at one time. When a person is driving and



Continued on the back →



Even if a person is using hands-free devices to talk on the phone while driving, they are still distracted.



Continued from page 1

talking, the brain is not working on both at the same time. The brain is switching from focusing on one activity to the other — back and forth.

MYTH 2: Talking to someone on the cell phone is the same as talking to someone in the car.

When there are two people in a car talking, there are actually an extra set of eyes on the road. If a car passenger feels as though there is a traffic condition that needs attention, he or she is likely to alert the driver. A person who is talking to a driver on the other end of a cell phone conversation cannot see the traffic conditions on the road and therefore cannot alert the driver. Studies have also found that adult passengers tend to slow down conversation when traffic looks more challenging. Again, a person on the other end of a call cannot see the traffic and slow down the conversation accordingly.

MYTH 3: Hands-free driving is safe driving.

Even if a person is using hands-free devices to talk on the phone while driving, they are still distracted. One study found that a person talking while driving can miss up to 50 percent of what is happening around them, including red lights and

pedestrians. Many times a distracted driver may look, but they do not really see what is happening as the brain is trying to engage in conversation.

MYTH 4: A person who is talking while driving has a quicker reaction time than a person who is driving under the influence.

In a driving simulator experiment, those on the cell phone while driving actually had SLOWER reaction times than participants who were at the legal intoxication level of 0.08 blood alcohol content.

Talking on a cell phone while driving is risky. You can eliminate your risk by simply not using the phone when you drive. If you need to stay in touch with someone, be sure to call before you leave and/or after you arrive at your destination.

SOURCES:

- AAA (2013). <http://newsroom.aaa.com/2013/06/think-you-know-all-about-distracted-driving-think-again-says-aaa>
- National Safety Council. Distracted Driving: One Call Can Change Everything. <http://www.nsc.org/learn/NSC-Initiatives/Pages/distracted-driving.aspx>

Adult
Health Bulletin

Written by: Nicole Peritore
Edited by: Connee Wheeler
Designed by: Rusty Manseau
Stock images: 123RF.com

