



SO YOUR TEEN WANTS A CAR?



**A PARENT'S GUIDE
TO CHOOSING A VEHICLE**

SAFETY

It's critical to choose a vehicle with features that can help prevent crashes and minimize their injury effects. Your teen may be thinking "sporty," but you should think twice about buying a car that could tempt a teen to speed or drive recklessly. A midsize sedan is a better choice than a large-capacity van or SUV because such "top-heavy" vehicles are more susceptible to rolling over in a crash. Consider a late-model vehicle equipped with modern safety features such as:

- **Antilock braking system, or ABS** – Helps drivers maintain vehicle stability and steering control during hard braking.
- **Daytime running lights** – Increase the driver's ability to see and improve vehicle visibility.
- **Electronic stability control, or ESC** – Works with ABS to sense speed and provide independent braking to each wheel to improve vehicle control on slick roads or at high speeds. This feature has been shown to reduce fatalities in single-vehicle crashes by 36 percent, single-vehicle rollover crashes involving cars by 70 percent and single-vehicle rollover crashes among other vehicle models by 88 percent, according to IIHS.
- **Airbags** – Frontal airbags work in conjunction with seat belts to restrain occupants and minimize crash-related injuries. Found in many newer models, side-impact airbags reduce injury risk in side collisions and have been shown to reduce driver fatality risk by 37 percent in cars and 52 percent in SUVs.
- **Adjustable/lockable head restraints** – Provide head and neck protection during a crash. Adjusted properly, such restraints offer maximum protection against whiplash.

Ask your AAA office for a copy of Buying a Safer Car, which provides crash-test ratings for a wide range of vehicles. For more information, access www.AAA.com or www.safercar.gov.

You also should ensure the vehicle includes a user manual and emergency kit. The manual covers operation, maintenance, precautions and safety tips. Encourage your teen to read it and become familiar with the car he or she will be driving. It's a good idea to discuss what to do in an emergency. AAA offers a free brochure on the topic titled The AAA Guide to Trouble-Free Travel.

FACTS ABOUT YOUNG ADULTS AGES 16 TO 20

Age (Years)	Male	Female
16-20	2,402	1,046
21-24	1,938	578
25-44	5,498	2,091
45-64	3,435	1,571
65-74	1,062	504
75+	1,419	756

CHART 11 Driver Fatality Rates Per 100,000 Licensed Drivers in 2002 By Age and Gender, In Passenger Vehicles

