

Booster seats provide protection for older children

◆ Anderson M, et al. *Am J Prev Med.* April 17, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2rB8W5e>.

Car booster seats keep children as old as 12 safer than seat belts alone, according to a new study.

Roughly 242 children ages 8-12 years died in vehicle crashes in 2015, making crashes the leading cause of injury deaths for that age group.

To ensure seat belts are positioned properly, the Academy and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration suggest using boosters for children up to age 12 depending on the child's height and weight, but no state requires them to be used after age 8, according to the study. In 2013, roughly 10% of 8- to 12-year-olds used boosters, up from 5% in 2009.

Researchers analyzed crash data from the Washington State Department of Transportation from 2002-'15. Of the 79,859 children ages 8-12 involved in vehicle crashes, 7.4% were sitting in a booster seat and the rest were using a seat belt only.

Among children using a booster seat, 11% were injured compared to 15% of those using a seat belt. Roughly 0.3% of each group sustained an incapacitating or fatal injury.

Booster seat use was associated with a 29% reduction in injuries in the unadjusted models and a 19% reduction in injuries in the adjusted models that took into account the vehicle type and seating position. Neither model showed the booster seat provided more protection from incapacitating/fatal injuries than the seat belt alone.

"The present results suggest that the adoption of laws encouraging the use of booster seats among children aged 8-12 years could lead to fewer injuries," authors wrote.

