



## Out walking

Pedestrians, along with cyclists and motorcyclists are often called 'vulnerable road users'. This is because of their lack of protection if hit by a vehicle.

Young people are especially vulnerable as they:

- often travel alone
- get easily distracted and are often inattentive when walking in groups
- may travel long distances to school, and to social and sporting events
- may be influenced by their friends to act unsafely
- walk while using their mobile phone or listening to music
- do not always give adequate time to check for traffic before attempting to cross the road
- may be starting to experiment with alcohol or other drugs.



### Staying safe while out walking

Help your children to plan their walking routes. Suggest that they try to avoid heavy traffic areas and highlight locations where it is safe to cross roads such as crosswalks, traffic islands and traffic signals with pedestrian lights. Remind your children to always wait until traffic has completely stopped before stepping onto a crosswalk as some drivers do not always stop.

### Check for traffic

Taking time to adequately check for traffic can be overlooked by children so remind them to always 'stop, look, listen and think' before they cross.

### Highlight the dangers of walking while talking on mobile phones or listening to music through headphones

Young people like to listen to music and talk on their mobile phone, however these devices can distract their attention and block out traffic sounds that alert pedestrians to possible dangers. Encourage your children to not use these devices while out walking and to stay alert at all times.

### Walking with friends

Help your children to choose a few excuses that can be used in situations where their friends encourage them to act unsafely. Using parents as an excuse is often a good ploy "I'm not going to do that. Mum will ground me if she finds out".

### Set a good example

Children watch their parents from a very young age. When you are out walking follow the road rules explaining to your children that you expect them to do the same.

### Agree on a 'getting home safely' plan

Make sure your children know what to do if a situation arises where they feel unsafe or can't get home, especially after dark. For example, what should they do if they miss the bus or a pre-arranged lift doesn't arrive? Give your child two other numbers to call if they need help and put these in the contact list of their phone.