

## Fact Sheet 6

### Young Drivers aged 17-25 years. Why are they at risk?

#### Facts:

1. Road crashes are one of the leading causes of injury, disability and death among young people.
2. Young drivers are over-represented in road crashes compared to other age groups.
3. Young drivers in rural areas experience a higher rate of fatalities than those from urban areas.
4. Speeding is the number one cause of road crashes.
5. Other high-risk behaviours that significantly contribute to road crashes and injuries include:
  - Drink driving
  - Driver fatigue and distraction
  - Not using seat belts

**Driver inexperience:** Often young drivers don't realise that it takes time and lots of practice to develop safe driving skills.

**Developing brain:** Parts of the brain responsible for self control and for recognising and managing hazards do not fully mature until after the teenage years, so young drivers are more likely to experiment and take dangerous risks.

**Overconfidence and risk taking:** Young drivers can be over confident about their driving ability and underestimate dangers on the road.

**Having friends as passengers:** Young drivers may be distracted by passengers or may feel pressured to take risks, such as speeding. Every extra peer passenger carried by a young driver increases the chance of crashing.

**Alcohol and other drugs:** Young people often do not understand that alcohol and other drugs affect a driver's skills, mood and most importantly behaviour. Safe driving requires clear judgement, concentration and ability to react to what's happening on the road.

**Busy lifestyles:** Work, sport and study often mean busy lifestyles for young people, which may cause them to drive when tired – especially late at night. Driving tired significantly impairs driving, even if the driver doesn't feel sleepy.

The RRISK program aims to increase awareness of these risk factors and how to improve road safety. For more information about the RRISK program and risk taking, visit our website [www.rrisk.com.au](http://www.rrisk.com.au)