

Health Unit Media Release

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Be Safe: Be Seatbelt Savvy

More than one-third of the people killed in traffic collisions are not buckled up. It seems that many of Ontario's drivers, passengers and parents are still not getting the message: **seat belts and child safety seats save lives.**

To help spread the word, the Leeds & Grenville Risk Watch Coalition, the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit and the Brockville Police Services have teamed up this Spring to promote seatbelt safety – part of an ongoing, province-wide effort to let people know how to protect themselves and their children from injury.

Did you know?

- Traffic collisions kill nearly 800 people, and injure more than 70,000 each year in Ontario — nearly one third of those killed were not wearing seatbeltsⁱ
- A correctly used child safety seat can reduce the chance of injury or death by 75 per cent.ⁱⁱ

Buckle up!

In 2006, Ontario made it mandatory for every passenger to wear a seatbelt and made drivers responsible for ensuring children under 16 were properly secured. Drivers who don't follow these rules face stiff penalties, including a \$110 fine and two demerit points. Research shows that wearing your seatbelt properly will dramatically increase your chances of surviving a collision.

Proper seatbelt use means:

- **No doubling up – only one person to a seatbelt.**
- **Wearing it right: the shoulder belt should be worn closely against the body and over the shoulder and across the chest, never under the arm. The lap belt should be firm against the body and low across the hips.**

Keeping kids safe

It's up to parents and caregivers to ensure children are safely secured in a child safety seat. But for a child safety seat to work, it must be used correctly. This means proper installation and seat choice, which depends on your child's age, weight and/or height.

For help choosing the seat that's right for your child, and for installation tips, visit Ontario's [SmartLove](http://www.ontario.ca/smartlove) website, www.ontario.ca/smartlove, the Health Unit's website, www.healthunit.org, or call the Health Action Line 1-800-660-5853.

All it takes is a moment to make sure your child's car seat or booster seat is set up correctly, or to remind a passenger to buckle up — you could end up saving a life!

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Contact: Sergeant Doug Locke, Community Safety Officer, 613-342-0127 ext. 4228

ⁱ *Ontario Road Safety Annual Report 2004*, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/orsar/orsar04/>

ⁱⁱ Infant and Toddler Safety Association