

## Talking on Cell While Walking May Put Kids At Risk for Serious Injuries

I first overheard this news story on 880 AM going to work. It seems like it is indeed difficult, if not downright dangerous, to walk and talk at the same time:

Not only shouldn't teens talk on cell phones when they drive, they shouldn't talk when they walk, either, a new study finds.

Psychologists at the University of Alabama Birmingham report children who talk on cell phones while crossing streets are at a higher risk for injuries or death in a pedestrian accident.

The study will be appearing in the February issue of *Pediatrics*.

Cell phones are convenient and offer a sense of security to families but they also may pose risk of substantial harm, particularly when children attempt to multitask while talking on the cell. They end up with lowered ability to devote to potentially dangerous activities such as crossing streets.

In the study, 77 children, aged 10-11, completed simulated street crossings in the virtual environment. They were asked to cross the virtual street six times without a cell phone and six times while talking on a cell phone with an unfamiliar research assistant.

The study revealed that it took children tested in a virtual environment, who were on a cell phone, 20 percent longer to begin crossing the street, and they were 43 percent more likely to be hit by a vehicle or have a close call. In addition, the children looked both ways 20 percent fewer times before crossing the street and gave themselves 8 percent less time to cross safely in front of oncoming traffic when they were on the cell phone.

Just as drivers need to eliminate cell phone use while driving, pedestrians, and especially kid pedestrians, should avoid using cell phone while crossing streets, the UAB researchers said.

Since my kid, who is now five years old, is already asking me for a cell phone, this study really caught my eye. Of course, my child will not be getting a cell any time soon, but I know that I will have to think about this study when it's time to let her have one.

The study was partially supported by the UAB Injury Control Research Center through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and a cooperative agreement with the Federal Highway Administration.

You can read more about the study here:

[http://newsfeedresearcher.com/data/articles\\_t5/phone-cell-children.html](http://newsfeedresearcher.com/data/articles_t5/phone-cell-children.html)