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Opening day for Little League! Ball game evenings and nights! Field trip days! Springtime! Summertime! The weather may finally ease up on us a little bit and the sunshine may invite us outside to enjoy nature at its finest! As each of these becomes a reality, more and more people are out and about – on foot! Everyone is a pedestrian at some point and time!

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) works hard to raise awareness of the dangers to pedestrians, and to promote leadership, expertise, and resources to communities across America to combat pedestrian crashes – which are all too familiar, even in our rural county.

It's our responsibility as parents and caregivers to help children learn to be safe when walking – and to continue to guide them as they become drivers in our community.

Pretty much each morning as I head to work, I pass at least one person who is walking along a street that does not have a sidewalk. We seem to be in a routine, since I often pass the same person walking towards me at about the same time each morning. We wave, smile, and move along! Turns out that is a good practice! One of the safety tips we can learn is to Never assume that a driver sees you when you are walking! You should make eye contact with drivers as they approach you to make sure you are seen. Hey, and the smile and wave don't hurt either!

Walk on a sidewalk, whenever they are available. If you must walk along a roadway, always walk facing traffic and as far from traffic as possible.

Keep alert at all times! Don't be distracted by electronic devices that take your eyes and ears off the road. Always avoid alcohol and drugs when walking. They can impair your abilities and judgment, too.

Cross streets at crosswalks or intersections whenever possible. Thanks to the City of Madisonville for adding a crosswalk between the Courthouse and the Annex – now let's use it! (I'm guilty, too!)

Look for cars in all directions –including those turning right or left, entering or exiting driveways, or backing up in parking lots.

Be visible at all times. Wear bright clothing during the day, and wear reflective materials or use a flashlight at night, if you must be on the road.

These are just a few ideas to get you thinking more safety as a pedestrian, next week we'll focus on some ways we can practice pedestrian safety when we're driving! Until then, and always, Be Safe Out There!
