Walk This Way!
Walking is a healthy activity and a great way for the whole family to enjoy the outdoors. However, it’s important to be aware of the risks when out walking, especially around traffic. The following safety tips will help make every walk a fun and safe activity for all.

Four Major Risks
1. Intersections - When out walking, cross the street at marked intersections. But ALWAYS check for cars before crossing. Intersections are usually heavy with traffic.
2. Vehicles Backing Up - Never assume that a driver can see you, especially if you’re walking behind their car. Watch for parked cars at every driveway and intersection that may be about to turn, pull out or back up.
3. Drivers Not Seeing Pedestrians - Just because you can see a driver, that does not mean that they can see you. Wear bright or reflective clothing, and carry a flashlight if walking at dawn or dusk.
4. Trust - Safety measures such as crosswalks and traffic lights are meant to keep us safe. But they don’t always prevent injuries from happening. Always be aware what is going on around you.

Cross the Street the Right Way
• Stop at the curb or edge of the street.
• Look left, right, left, then behind and in front for traffic.
• Wait until no traffic is coming to begin crossing.
• Keep looking for traffic until finished crossing.
• Walk, don’t run across the street.
• Obey all traffic signs and signals.
• Make yourself visible before walking in front of a car at a crosswalk by waving to the driver and waiting for them to wave back or by making eye contact with the driver.
• Wear bright clothes.
• Pick routes that have sidewalks. If there isn’t a sidewalk, walk facing traffic and stay as far to the left as possible.
• Limit the number of street crossings.
• Avoid crossing busy or high-speed streets.
• Walk with a friend when possible.
• Don’t text while walking.

Walking with Children
Children should understand the rules of safe walking. Stick to the route picked with your parents. Don’t take shortcuts that may be dangerous.

It takes time and practice for a child to develop the ability to deal with lots of traffic. When older, they will be able to correctly judge the speed and distance of oncoming traffic.

There is no magic age when children are old enough to walk without an adult. As a parent, you should decide when your child has the skills and know-how to deal with traffic safely.

Always take your child’s hand when crossing busy streets and in parking lots.

Test Your Child’s Skills While Walking
• Can your child hear a car or truck coming? What may be interfering with their hearing?
• Can they feel the ground shake?
• Can they see oncoming traffic?
• Can oncoming traffic see them?

Sources: National Center for Safe Routes to School, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center