

osteogenesis imperfecta, osteoporosis & arthritis (if the person can sit at a safe distance from the air bag), previous ophthalmologic surgery, Down syndrome and atlantoaxial instability (if the person can reliably sit properly aligned), or pregnancy. The physicians recommended turning off an air bag if a safe sitting distance or position cannot be maintained by a driver because of scoliosis or achondroplasia or by a passenger because of scoliosis or Down syndrome and atlantoaxial instability. The physicians also noted that a passenger air bag might have to be turned off if an infant or child has a medical condition and must ride in front so that he or she can be monitored. To obtain a copy of the recommendations, call the NHTSA Hotline or see the NHTSA Web site.

### Two other risk groups may be better off with an air bag on-off switch:

- **Children ages 1 to 12.** Children in this age group can be transported safely in the front seat if they are properly belted, they do not lean forward, and their seat is moved all the way back. The vast majority of all fatally injured children in this age range were completely unrestrained. But children sometimes sit or lean far forward and may slip out of their shoulder belts, putting themselves at risk. The simple act of leaning far forward to change the radio station can momentarily place even a belted child in danger. If a vehicle owner must transport a child in the front seat, the owner is eligible for an on-off switch for the passenger air bag. Since air bag performance differs from vehicle model to vehicle model, the vehicle owner may wish to consult the vehicle manufacturer for additional advice.

**CAUTION:** If you allow children to ride in the front seat while unrestrained or improperly restrained, and especially if you sit with a child on your lap, **you are putting them at serious risk, with or without an air bag.** Turning off the air bag is not the safe answer. It would eliminate air bag risk but not the likelihood that in a crash an unrestrained child would fly through the air and strike the dashboard or windshield, or be crushed by your body.

- **Drivers who cannot get back 10 inches.** Very few drivers are unable to sit so that their breastbone is 10 inches away from their air bag. If, despite your best efforts, you cannot maintain a distance of 10 inches, you may wish to **consult your dealer or vehicle manufacturer for advice or modifications to help you move back.**

Since the risk zone is the first 2-3 inches from the air bag cover, sitting back 10 inches provides a clear margin of safety. While getting back at least 10 inches is desirable, if you can get back almost 10 inches, the air bag is unlikely to seriously injure you in a crash and you probably don't need an on-off switch. If you cannot get back almost 10 inches from the air bag cover, you may wish to consider an on-off switch. Since air bag performance differs among vehicle models, you may wish to consult your vehicle manufacturer for additional advice.