

## Don't Dine And Drive

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In recent years, more studies have revealed what, sadly, should be obvious. Distracted drivers cause accidents. While you may suspect that this article is going to provide another warning about the danger of using cell phones in traffic....this warning is much more low-tech. While having involved cell phone conversations behind the steering wheel continues to cause problems, a bigger problem lies with plain old eating and drinking.

The study was performed by the University of North Carolina and was funded by the American Automobile Association (AAA). The results showed that a wide variety of sources cause distractions for drivers and, while hazardous; only a small percentage (to date) has involved cell phone use. While drivers certainly are safer not using the phone (or pulling over and stopping) while driving; a more common danger is meals and wheels.

Besides the fact that most food-related accidents happen in the morning (prime eating time), the most popular food items were:

- Coffee
- Hot soup
- Tacos
- Chili
- Hamburgers
- Barbecue
- Fried chicken
- Jelly Donuts
- Soft Drinks
- Chocolate

When considering the potential of eating and drinking as a distraction; it should not be surprising to find that doing so results in more accidents. Besides the act of eating and drinking, a lot of preparation often accompanies the situation. Consider fumbling around with sandwich wrappers, adding sweeteners or cream to tea or coffee, putting in straws for cold drinks (how about getting poked in the eye with a straw), devoting one arm/hand for handling food drink, dealing with condiments. Drivers who are eating/drinking also face reacting to spills; particularly when it involves something very messy or worse, very hot.

The key issue for drivers to remember is that, no matter one's amount of experience; driving is difficult and dangerous. All forms of distraction should be avoided, or at least kept to a minimum. You and the persons sharing the roadways with you will be better off if you focus on driving and not on a meal.

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