



# Teen Talk

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## TEXTING & DRIVING — By Erica Cuevas



At the start of the school year a college freshman from a small town in Massachusetts died when her car hit a tree. Neither drugs nor alcohol were to blame. The reason her car crossed the yellow line and ended up on the opposite side of the

road was because she was distracted by her cell phone. The phone records showed that she had been sending and receiving text messages during the time of the fatal crash; an accident that could have been prevented. It is extremely disturbing to hear about a tragedy like this. When your eyes are off the road, you are not only putting your own life in danger, but the lives of others as well.

Texting while driving is currently a leading factor in car accidents. To address this problem, President Obama signed an executive order that will ban cell phone use while driving government vehicles. Eighteen states have banned cell phone use for anyone driving a car. In Massachusetts, there are more than a dozen bills waiting to be reviewed that will limit the use of cell phones while driving in this state. Locally, a member of the Boston City Council has introduced legislation that imposes a ban on texting in Boston, to try and prevent car accidents. This serious problem is finally receiving much needed attention.

If your phone is on while you are driving, it can be really hard to ignore it. The next thing you know, you're reading or responding to a text message, and your eyes are off the road. Just imagine being blindfolded for even 5 seconds—because that's essentially what it's like when your eyes are on your cell phone and not on the road. So much can happen in just a few seconds! It's just NOT worth it. Being in communication with your friends and family is certainly important, but your safety and the safety of others are **more** important. Your best bet is to turn your phone off before you start the car and keep it off until you reach your destination. If you must text, pull over in a safe zone, and stop the car. There are certain things that are just NOT COOL to do while you're driving, such as eating, reading, and texting!

Do your part and control your urge to read or respond to texts while driving and expect the same from a driver if you're the passenger! ♥



## Emily's Health Tips

As many of you may know, the H1N1 virus (also known as Swine Flu) is a major cause for concern. State health officials are working to limit the spread of the virus. Hospitals are now limiting visitors to only immediate family over the age of eighteen. Local worship centers are also making changes in the way services are held to limit the spread of the virus.

If you have been a spectator at a high school sports game lately, you may have noticed that the players no longer shake hands at the end of the game. Instead, football, soccer, hockey and other sports teams are clicking elbows to avoid the possibility of sharing flu germs that are often spread by hand to hand contact. You may have also heard about "Swine Flu parties" where people expose themselves to others who are sick with the hope of becoming immune to it. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is NOT recommending this approach! The only safe way to become immune to the Swine flu is to get vaccinated.

### Here are 8 easy ways to stay Flu-Free:

1. Ask your health care provider about getting the H1N1 vaccine.
2. Don't share water bottles or other drinks.
3. Suggest that your school change the post game tradition of shaking hands if your school hasn't put this new practice into place yet.
4. Avoid close contact with people who are sick with flu symptoms.
5. Wash your hands with soap and water. This is the #1 way to avoid getting sick!
6. Carry a small bottle of hand sanitizer in your backpack or purse for times when you can't use soap and water to wash your hands.
7. Cough into your elbow.
8. Boost your immune system by eating nutritious food. ♥

For more info on the H1N1 virus visit:  
[youngwomenshealth.org/h1n1\\_flu.html](http://youngwomenshealth.org/h1n1_flu.html)

## TEXTING & DRIVING QUIZ (True or False)

1. Drivers take their eyes off the road for an average of 5 seconds per text. This may not seem like a long time, but that's all it takes for a car to travel over 100 yards.  T  F
2. 1 out of 5 car accidents occur either because a driver was texting or using their cell phone; the majority of these accidents are among drivers under the age of 20.  T  F
3. 67% of drivers reported talking on the cell phone while driving.  T  F
4. 21% of drivers reported text messaging while driving.  T  F

1 and 2: Data from the U.S. Department of Transportation found in New York's Senator Charles E. Schumer's October 2009 press release • 3 and 4: Statistics provided by the AAAfoundation.org. The statistics came from a random telephone survey of 2,501 US residents 16 years +. It was conducted both in English and Spanish via landline and cellular phones from April 15, 2009–May 12, 2009.

Answers: 1. True, 2. True, 3. True, 4. True.

## Ask Ty



Hey Ty, winter break is so boring. Do you have any tips on fun things to do?

For some of us, winter break can be the most uneventful time of the year. If you have nothing to do, no place to go, and no one to hang out with, two weeks off from school can be so dull and boring! But I have good news! I did some research and discovered there's actually a lot you can do right here in Beantown. Here are some ideas to consider:

- \* **Ice skating on Frog Pond:** Invite a group of friends for a night of ice skating and hot chocolate. This is an activity that can be fun for the whole family, and easy on your wallet!
- \* **See a movie:** There are a lot of great holiday movies out during this time of year, so why not check out the new movie you've been dying to see. If you're short on cash, catch a ½ price matinee or have movie night at your house. Just add snacks and great company.
- \* **Boston Trolley Tour:** You may live in Boston, but have you ever taken a trolley tour? It's a lot of fun. You'll get to see all the famous spots in Boston, such as where Paul Revere road his horse and where some movies have been filmed.
- \* **Go to a museum:** The Children's Museum, Science Museum, Museum of Fine Arts—there are so many possibilities. Spend a day enriching your mind. You'll be surprised at all the fun you'll have. Show your school ID and get a discount.
- \* **Build a snowman:** This is a classic activity that we never get tired of. Invite your family to build a snowman with you, or plan a competitive event with your friends.

There are so many things that you can do to keep busy during your winter break. Just be creative and try to think outside the box. Gather your friends and family and use your imagination, and don't forget to stay safe. For more ideas of things you can do during the winter break, check out: [yelp.com/topic/boston-things-to-do-boston-winter](http://yelp.com/topic/boston-things-to-do-boston-winter)

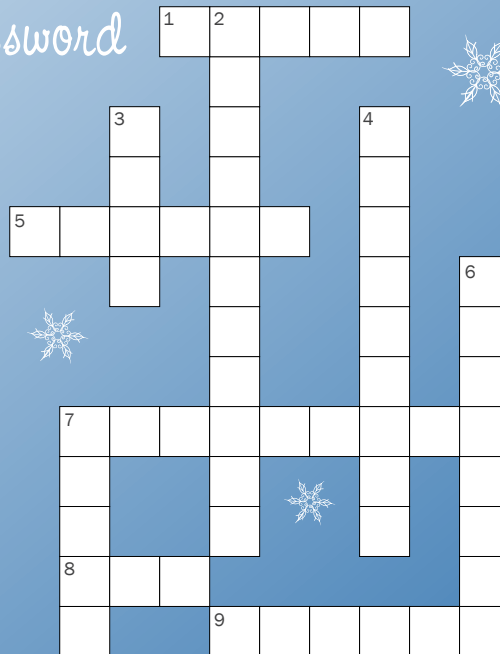
## Winter Wonderland Crossword

### Across

1. An ice house for penguins
5. An tool that we use to get rid of the snow on our walkways
7. Lets warm up in front of the \_\_\_\_\_
8. To glide over snow
9. What most of us do when we are cold

### Down

2. A tasty treat that can be shaped like people or houses
3. Falls on the ground in Boston but not so much in Los Angeles
4. What some animals do during this time of the year
6. The twelfth month of the year
7. \_\_\_\_\_ bite is very painful



## Erica's Corner

Recently while in my Social Science class, I learned about Charles Horton Cooley, a famous American sociologist. Cooley had a theory that people base their self image on the way they think other people view them. The way Cooley's theory

works is that if we believe someone thinks we are, for example, ugly, stupid or worthless, then we will feel that way if we are around that person a lot. If Cooley's theory is correct, it can have a huge impact on how a young woman might perceive herself.

Most young girls hang out with other young women. They look to their friends for approval for things ranging from their hairstyle and clothes, to who they should date. They also rely on their friends for support. Their girlfriends opinions about them are extremely important. Often within a group of friends, there's usually someone that is a little jealous, or not truly a "good" friend. For example, a so-called "friend" might say things that put down another girl. A young woman's self-esteem can be distorted by negative comments without her even realizing it.

*So how do you prevent your self-esteem from taking a big hit? Here are a few tips:*

- ♥ Hang out with people that have a positive image of you, and who are "true" friends.
- ♥ Talk it out—stop the cycle of negativity and talk to the person that is saying bad things about you. Let them know that what they say hurts your feelings.
- ♥ Believe in yourself—how you feel about yourself has the biggest impact on your self-esteem and should be the #1 thing that matters. ♥