

NARRATOR

Our lives are busier than ever. We try to accomplish so much with so little time. Unfortunately, this can lead to poor decisions — like deciding to speed when we're behind the wheel.

Each year, far too many people die as a result of speed-related crashes in Queensland with even more being seriously injured. We're paying a terrible price for speed — but is it actually getting us there quicker? The answer is no.

In fact, it barely makes a difference. On a 10km journey, travelling at 60km/hr, increasing your speed by 5km/hr will only save you 46 seconds. So you're potentially killing or seriously hurting yourself or someone else to get there a little quicker. An entire lifetime ruined to save 46 seconds is a terrible deal any way you look at it.

It may not seem like a big deal at first, but in a 60km zone, travelling as little as five kilometres over the limit can double your risk of a crash that results in an injury or a fatality.

Now think about this: a built up area has a default speed limit of 50km/h. This is because it's normally a busy area with people walking the streets or children playing that could run out at any time.

Now imagine that you're doing 10km/h over the speed limit. That means you're now travelling through a busy, suburban area at 60km/h.

This is where it gets crazy — a car travelling at 60km/h holds as much force as a stegosaurus being dropped from a three-story building.

So, by increasing your speed just slightly, you've potentially put children, cyclists, and dog walkers in the path of a prehistoric beast moving at free-fall speed.

Speed limits are carefully considered by professionals who understand the physics required to travel through an area safely.

That's because as your speed increases, you cover more distance before coming to a stop. That can be the difference between a near miss and a serious crash.

If environmental conditions change, like rain, dust, or fog, stopping safely before a crash becomes even more difficult. So what can we do to make sure we're travelling at a safe speed for our driving conditions?

We asked someone who has spent a lot of time studying what it takes to be able to come to a safe stop.

DR. ANGELA WATSON

The faster that you go, the more you're increasing your chance of having a crash — and also the severity of that crash if it does occur.

Sometimes some people just need to keep an eye on their speedo because there is that sort of sense that some people might speed inadvertently — so they don't realise that they're over the limit and they're not monitoring their speedometer very closely.

So, the recommended idea is to use seconds — and it's two or more seconds between you and the car in front of you. It's the idea that if you left two seconds between you and the vehicle in front, that would allow you sufficient distance if they stopped, for you to be able to stop safely behind them.

You can measure that by sort of finding something on the road, like a post or a tree, and then you count two seconds and that's where the front of your car should reach that same point.

We've got speed limits but in certain circumstances, actually driving to the conditions is more appropriate. So, things like dirt, gravel, windy roads, rain and weather events, and dust can make it difficult to drive safely. If you don't feel safe, slow down. It doesn't matter what other people are doing — never let someone pressure you into driving at a speed you're not comfortable with.

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Safe driving means you don't go over the speed limit but it also means using your best judgement. If you're not comfortable travelling as fast as the signed speed, it's okay to travel slower.

Don't let your passengers or other drivers pressure you to go faster than the signed speed limit. This would put you and others on the road in danger — and it certainly doesn't get you there faster.

So next time you feel like you need to get somewhere in a hurry, take a breath, think things through, and slow down.