Helmet & Bike Safety

- Bicycling is one of the most popular recreational activities in the U.S. and an important means of transportation.

- More than 70% of children ages 5 to 14 (27.7 million) ride bicycles. This age group rides 50% more than the average bicyclist and accounts for approximately 21% of all bicycle-related deaths and nearly half of all bicycle-related injuries.

- Head injuries account for more than 60% of bicycle-related deaths, more than two-thirds of bicycle-related hospital admissions and about one-third of hospital emergency room visits for bicycling injuries.

- Using a helmet is the single most effective safety device available to reduce head injury and death from bicycle crashes and can reduce the risk of severe brain injuries by 88%. Helmet use reduces the severity of head injury when a crash occurs.

- When buying a helmet, let your children pick out their own, they’ll be more likely to wear them for every ride.

- Made sure the helmet fits and your child knows how to put it on correctly.

- A helmet should sit on top of the head in a level position, and should not rock forward, backward or side to side. The helmet straps must always be buckled, but not too tightly. If a helmet moves when worn, adjust side and chin straps and add sizing pads to prevent the helmet from sliding. Double check the helmet before every ride.

Use a helmet correctly:

- Make sure to have the right size helmet and wear it every time when riding, skating or scooting.

- Be sure the helmet meets the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s (CPSC) standards.

- Long or loose clothing can get caught in bike chains or wheel spokes. Dress young kids appropriately to ensure a safe ride.

- Actively supervise children until you’re comfortable they are responsible to ride on their own.

- Keep your bike properly maintained. Have it checked over by a competent bike mechanic at least once a year.

- Model and teach proper behavior. Kids learn from watching you!

When riding a bike:

- Ensure proper bike fit by bringing the child along when shopping for a bike. Select one that is the right size for the child, not one he or she will grow into.

- Long or loose clothing can get caught in bike chains or wheel spokes. Dress young kids appropriately to ensure a safe ride.

- Actively supervise children until you’re comfortable they are responsible to ride on their own.

- Keep your bike properly maintained. Have it checked over by a competent bike mechanic at least once a year.

- Model and teach proper behavior. Kids learn from watching you!

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Bicycles are vehicles, and riders must follow the rules of the road:

- Stay to the right and ride with traffic.
- Stop at all stop signs, red lights and yield signs.
- Use appropriate hand signals when turning and stopping. Look behind before turning across traffic lanes.
- Stop at all stop signs and stoplights.
- Pedestrians always have the right of way.

Don’t assume motorists can see you:

- Make eye contact with drivers. Make sure drivers are paying attention and are going to stop before crossing the street.
- Avoid riding at night if possible. If you must ride after dark, make sure you are visible.

- In addition to light or brightly colored clothing, wear retroreflective material such as a vest and reflective straps on arms and legs. Retroreflective patches can be purchased inexpensively at fabric stores.
- Use a front and rear light -- reflectors alone are not adequate for a motorist to see a cyclist.
- Teach your child to stay alert and watch for cars and trucks.
- While traveling with “tunes” may be fun, avoid wearing headphones while bicycling. Headphones can impair your ability to hear traffic noise.