

Look to Logan...

Think Bicycle Helmets Aren't Cool? 130,000 Children in the U.S. Didn't Either

Head injuries are the cause of most bicycle fatalities in the U.S., and young cyclist are more likely to die of head injuries than adults. Statistics gathered by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found that in 2008 91 percent of cyclists killed were not wearing helmets. The physicians and staff at Logan Medical Center urge you to keep you and your kids outside having fun this summer and far from the emergency room—make sure everyone wears a helmet while riding a bike.

How helmets prevent head injury

Helmets protect a person's head by providing an extra layer of protection for your brain. A brain injury can occur by impact or when the head is violently jerked while the brain remains stationary, resulting in a straining of blood vessels and nerves. If you are wearing a helmet during a crash, however, its foam padding crushes, controlling much of the crash's energy. This extends your head's stopping time by a fraction of a second, which reduces the maximum impact on your brain.



Choosing the right helmet

It's easier than ever for anyone to purchase a helmet to his or her liking. As a matter of fact, helmets are cheaper and easier to adjust than ever before. Choosing the right helmet, however, is crucial. When purchasing a helmet, the first step is to find one with a seal of approval from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or the Snell Memorial Foundation.

Next, make sure the helmet you would like to buy fits snugly on the head. It shouldn't move more than one inch in any direction. If you or your child wears a ponytail, consider a helmet with a ponytail port. Also, make sure nothing on the helmet, like a strap, blocks vision. And choosing a bright-colored helmet is a good idea—bright colors make it easier for motorists to see cyclists.

Wearing a helmet the right way

A helmet only works, however, if worn correctly. The rules for wearing a helmet are the same for both children and adults. First of all, the helmet should be worn flat on the head. Adjust the straps to make sure it doesn't tip forward or backward. If the helmet still doesn't sit flat on the top of the head, you might have to try a different size.

The helmet also should cover the top of forehead with only one or two fingers between the edge of the helmet and the eyebrows. The straps should form "V"s under each ear, and it needs to be fastened snugly under the chin, not off to the side or along the jaw. Not more than a finger or two should be able to fit between strap and chin. Bicycle helmets come with extra padding. If the helmet moves too much from side to side or front to back, insert them into the helmet for a better fit. Make sure the helmet feels comfortable. You will probably have a difficult time getting a child to wear a helmet that is uncomfortable.

Remember to replace helmets that have been involved in accidents or are damaged. Finally, make sure both you and your family members wear helmets each and every time you ride your bikes. Helmets can save lives only when they are worn!

Encourage your kids to wear a helmet



Have you ever seen Lance Armstrong ride a bike without a helmet? Of course not! Probably because he values his brain. Convincing your children to wear helmets is worth the struggle: more than 200 children die each year in bicycle-related crashes. But there is good news. Wearing a helmet can reduce the chance of head injury by 85 percent. Also, it's important to model good behavior. In other words, if you want your kids to wear helmets, wear one yourself. Seeing you wear a helmet will make your words more powerful!

Logan Medical Center wishes you and your family a fun, safe summer. And remember, **look to Logan, www.MyLoganHealth.org**, to find information to help you manage your family's well being.



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