

# CYCLING INJURIES

People all over the world ride bicycles on a daily basis. Some competitively, others for recreation or transportation. Follow these tips and be a **safe cyclist!**



## WHO GETS INJURED THE MOST?

- 6-15 and 21-40 year-olds
- Males are more likely to get hurt than females
- People that ride at high speeds
- Older children and youth are more likely to die as a result of cycling injuries than younger children

## WHAT TYPES OF INJURIES OCCUR?

- Fall from bicycles can result in cuts and scrapes called *road rash*, broken bones or even concussions
- Most fatalities result from collisions with motor vehicles or trauma to the head

## WHEN DO INJURIES HAPPEN?

- Cycling injuries are most common during the times people are most likely to cycle - months with good weather, in daylight hours and on weekends
- The greatest time of risk (i.e. danger) for a cyclist occurs between 10PM to 6AM

## HOW DO INJURIES OCCUR?

Injuries tend to result from:

- Falls due to:
  - loss of balance while riding
  - road hazards like loose gravel or pot holes
- Unsafe environment (i.e. high traffic area, rough terrain, unexpected obstacles)
- Collisions with curbs, parked cars, trees, telephone poles
- Collisions with moving vehicles, other cyclists, pedestrians or animals
  - Poor riding techniques and ignoring the rules of the road
  - Bicycle malfunction
  - Improper bike size

*In Canada, cycling is the second most common cause of serious sports/recreational injuries, after ice hockey*

*Cycling injuries account for 10% of all pediatric traumatic deaths*

*Head injury is the most common cause of death, disability and serious injury in child cyclists who crash*

*Wearing a bicycle helmet has been shown to decrease the risk of head injury by more than 70%*

The British Columbia Injury Research and Prevention Unit (BCIRPU) is committed to meeting the challenge of making BC a safe place to live and work by coordinating efforts that will prevent or reduce injuries, their consequences and costs.

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SAFER RISKS & PRACTICES

*more on next page...*

# GENERAL TIPS TO STAY SAFE

## 1. PREPARE

- Warm-up and stretch before you start to cycle. This helps prevent muscle strains and sprains
- Take care of your bicycle and perform regular safety checks to prevent equipment failure:

**Air** (in tires)

**Brakes** (able to stop the bike completely)

**Chain** (moves easily and is clean and oiled)

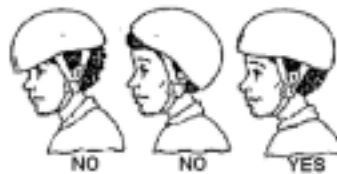
- Plan your route before leaving
- Drink plenty of fluids and use sunscreen to protect yourself from ultraviolet rays (UV)

## 2. GET THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

- Wear a **helmet** - It's the law in British Columbia and it could save your life

### TIPS ON WEARING A HELMET

1. Buy a helmet that fits snugly
  2. The helmet should be worn low on your forehead, no more than two finger widths above the eyebrows
  3. Side straps of the helmet should fit around the ear in a "V" shape
  4. Tighten the chin strap so that you can fit no more than one finger between the strap and the child's chin
  5. Helmets must meet safety standards (CSA, CPSC, Snell or ASTM approved). Look for the sticker, usually on the inside of the helmet
  6. The average lifetime of a bicycle helmet is five years. Helmets should also be replaced if there is a crash or any damage to the exterior shell or inner padding.
- Only ride proper fitted bicycles (i.e. correct frame size, saddle, handlebars, etc.)
  - Wear reflective and bright clothing and carry lights or strobes
  - Wear padded gloves and bicycle pants
  - Wear shoes that cover your toes



## 3. FOLLOW THE RULES

- Your bike should have proper reflectors and lights if you are riding at dusk, night or early morning
- Children in carrier seats must always wear a helmet and be belted into the seat
- Children younger than 10 years of age should not ride near traffic
- Children over 10 years need good training and lots of practice before riding on the road
- Make sure you are **aware of your surroundings and stay alert** when cycling in traffic
- Always follow the rules of the road



*The most common risk factor for bicycle head injury is the failure to wear a bicycle helmet*

*Cycling fatalities comprise 2.8% of all road-traffic deaths in Canada*

*96% of bicycle-related deaths between 1990 and 1992 involved a collision with a motor vehicle*

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