

Reduce Bicycle Injuries

More than 60 percent of deaths attributed to bicycle accidents are caused by head injuries. Younger children can be particularly vulnerable. In 1997, 225 children ages 14 and under died from injuries sustained in bicycle accidents. Safety experts suggest that as many as 75 percent of the bicycle-related fatalities involving children could be prevented with a bicycle helmet.

A head injury can be devastating. It can cause lifetime disability or even death.

The benefits from bicycling—healthful physical activity, companionship, and low-cost transportation—can be an important part of growing-up years. The activity also can be enjoyed by parents and children together.

Safety tips to reduce accidents and injuries while cycling:

- Consider a helmet a necessity, rather than an extra. Without a helmet, riders who sustain an injury are 14 times more likely to become a fatality.
- Choose a helmet that is specifically designed for bicycling, rather than a multi-sports helmet.
- Choose a helmet that meets or exceeds safety standards established by the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Choose a helmet that fits, rather than one a child will grow into.
- Replace the helmet if an accident occurs or if the helmet is badly jarred or cracked.

Helmets can be purchased for as little as \$20. Each dollar invested in a helmet is expected to save \$30 in direct medical costs and other injury-related expenses, such as long-term medical care. Helmets are recommended for all riders, regardless of age.

Follow the rules of the road:

- Ride with the traffic, rather than facing the traffic.
- Use the bicycle lane or ride next to the curb.
- Obey traffic signals.
- Stay alert and keep your mind on your riding.

Bicycles are prohibited on some roadways, and some cities and towns ban bicycles from sidewalks. Eighty percent of bicycle-related fatalities are associated with rider behavior, such as running a stop sign or swerving in traffic.

Many parents ask at what age a child is old enough to ride in the street rather than on the sidewalk.

There isn't a one-size-fits-all age. A child's maturity level is a factor. Other factors are the size of the community, traffic patterns and congestion, and whether it is a residential area or a business district. A smaller community can seem peaceful and safe, but may have periods when safety is compromised—for example, after a ball game, during a community festival, or at harvesttime.

Periodic bicycle maintenance—lubrication; checking tire pressure and condition; brakes; pedals; lights or reflectors—also is recommended.

Mike Bradshaw

How-Tos for Hard Boiled Eggs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has published guidelines to encourage the safety of preparing hard-boiled eggs. The guidelines are as follows:

1. Put eggs in a single layer in a saucepan and add enough tap water to cover the eggs by at least one inch.
2. Cover.
3. Put on high heat until water boils.
4. Turn off heat. If necessary, remove pan from burner to prevent further boiling.
5. Let eggs stand in the hot water. Start with 15 minutes for large eggs, then adjust the time up or down by approximately three minutes for each size larger or smaller.
6. Cool immediately and thoroughly in cold water.
7. Refrigerate until ready for use.

Karen Blakeslee

PARENTS CORNER

Protecting Your Children

Divorcing parents often have unpleasant feelings towards each other. They may find it easy to find fault with the other parent in front of the children. When one parent talks with disrespect about the other parent in the children's presence, it's hard on the children. They feel caught in the middle and battle with loyalty to one parent or the other. The children might even wonder if they are bad since each parent is part of them. What can a parent do when frustrated with the other parent? Vent the feelings to another adult when the children are not around.

Charlotte Shoup Olsen

Immunizations Are Important

Immunizations are an easy way to protect your children from life-threatening diseases. Although children are immunized for many diseases that are almost nonexistent, not immunizing your children could put them at serious risk if an outbreak does occur.

Prevnar[®] was introduced in February 2000 to protect children against meningitis, pneumonia, bacteremia (blood poisoning), sinusitis (inflammation of sinus cavities), and acute otitis (ear infection). All of these illnesses can be very serious and some are life threatening.

Prevnar[®] can be given when children receive other immunizations. Children under two years of age should get four doses of this vaccine. The recommended dosage times are:

- One dose at 2 months of age,
- One dose at 4 months of age,
- One dose at 6 months of age,
- One dose at 12–15 months of age.

It is best to have your child vaccinated early, but Prevnar[®] can still be given to children between 2 and 5 years of age.

If you have any additional questions, please contact your local physician or health department.

Mike Bradshaw and Leah Charbonneau

Turn on Family Mealtime

Is the television a focal point for your family meals? Parents may want to take a close look at what is being "served" at dinner time. A recent study by the Children's Nutrition Research Center found that 42 percent of middle school students who ate dinner at home were seated in front of the television. This can be a problem, because family mealtime is important for children's nutrition as well as their social development.

There is a proven link between the number of hours children watch television and weight problems. TV watchers may continue to eat after their body signals them they have eaten enough. Additionally, family mealtime conversations are positive influences on children. The White House Council of Economic Advisers conducted research that revealed the more meals teens eat with their families, the less likely they are to smoke or use alcohol or drugs.

Start to reinforce positive, TV-free meals when your children are young. Parents can help build healthy children and strong families by turning off the television during mealtimes and tuning in to family-focused meals.

Sandy Procter

Avoid Procrastination

Putting things off until the last minute is a big time waster. If you do an unpleasant task first, it will be out of the way. Reward yourself for accomplishing those jobs. If there is a big project that must be completed, divide it into small manageable tasks and do them one at a time. For example, instead of dreading the task of cleaning the storage room, start with organizing one shelf at a time.

Megan Mayo and Katey Walker

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Phone:

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service