

## Bicycle Safety

July 6, 2011

### BICYCLE SAFETY



Americans love their bicycles. We buy more than 18 million bikes each year and spend nearly \$6 billion dollars on bicycles, related parts, and accessories. But before we hop on our new wheels and go for a ride, we need to slow down and learn about the rules of bicycle safety.

**Rule 1. Check your equipment.**

Tires should be inflated properly and the chain oiled regularly. Check brakes for frayed cables and replace worn break pads. Adjust the bike to the proper height. Allow one to three inches of space above the top bar when standing with both feet flat on the ground. The bike seat should be level and seat height should allow for a slight knee bend when the leg is completely extended. Handlebars

should be adjusted to the same height as the seat. If you have a child seat on the back of your bicycle, make sure you have spoke guards to prevent your child's foot from getting caught in the spokes.

**Rule 2. Dress appropriately.**

Wear brightly colored, neon, or fluorescent clothing so others can see you on the road. Watch out for backpack straps, shoelaces, loose-fitting clothes, or flared pant legs that can get caught in the bike chain. Don't ride barefoot and avoid shoes that don't grip the pedals, such as flip-flops, heels, or cleats. Wear sports glasses to protect your eyes from dust or bugs.

**Rule 3. Always wear a helmet.**

Straps should form a "V" underneath each earlobe and no more than one finger's width should

fit beneath the strap. The helmet should be worn level and cover the forehead, with the rim resting approximately one to two fingers width above the eyebrows. Straps must be fastened when riding. Never wear a hat under the helmet. A child riding in a carrier seat also should wear a helmet.

**Rule 4. Follow the rules of the road.**

Go with the flow of traffic, and look both ways before crossing a busy street. Stop at all stop signs, cross at intersections, and yield to pedestrians or traffic when appropriate. Ride in a straight line and use correct hand signals with turning or changing lanes. Don't ride too close to parked cars in case a door opens suddenly.

**Rule 5. Ride smart.**

Keep at least one hand on the handlebars at all times and watch out for obstacles that could cause you to lose bike control, such as potholes, storm grates, railroad tracks, cracks, puddles, wet leaves, or rocks. Carry books or other items in a bike carrier or backpack. Be aware of cars around you, and don't wear headphones or stand up while riding a bike. Avoid riding at dusk or in the dark.

Riding a bike is good exercise and is easier on the joints than jogging. It can help you get in shape, reduce your risk of health problems, and lose weight. Following the rules of bicycle safety, helps ensure you can bike for miles and stay safe on two wheels. For more information about bicycle safety, visit the

Please turn to **SAFETY 19B**

# Important bicycle safety rules

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## **SAFETY**

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National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov).

And if an accident does happen, North Shore Medical Center's emergency room is avail-

able 24-hours a day to get you and your family back on track for summer fun. For more information about North Shore Medical Center's Emergency department please call 305-835-6190 or for a physician referral please call 1-800-984-3434.