Bike Riding

The month of June begins summer, and it is also a wonderful time for you and your children to ride bikes! Bike riding is a fun way for a family to spend time together being physically active. Although riding bikes is a fun activity, it also requires the knowledge of bike safety. You and your children should be aware of the traffic rules and precautions that must be taken before bike riding. It is a good idea to review bike riding rules and precautions with your children.

Always Wear a Helmet

Both you and your children should ALWAYS wear helmets whenever you are riding a bike. Falling off of a bike and hitting your head can result in head injuries that could affect your ability to walk, talk and think. Wearing a helmet can reduce head injuries by 85%. Check inside the helmet for a U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) sticker.

A helmet has certain requirements in order for it to be considered “well fitting.” A helmet should fit so that when it is on your head, you should be able to see the top edge of the helmet. The helmet’s straps should form a “Y” under the ears and should be tight enough so that two fingers can fit under the chin strap. The helmet strap should fit tight enough so that when you open your mouth, the helmet should feel snug.

Where to Ride

Younger children should only ride on sidewalks. When on sidewalks, you should be aware of intersections and visibility problems. Riding bikes on sidewalks can be less safe than road cycling if the proper precautions are not taken. When riding on a sidewalk, cyclists must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, verbally signal the intent to pass, and should watch for signs that prohibit riding bicycles on certain sidewalks and crosswalks. Older children can ride on streets, as long as they are not too busy. When riding on the street, riders should always be on the right side of the road, but not too close to the curb. Riding too close to the curb might prevent motorists from seeing cyclists. When turning or crossing intersections, look left, then right, and left again to make sure it is safe. Riders should NEVER weave between cars. When riding on
trails, always keep to the right, pass on the left, and announce the intention to pass. If you wish to stop, you should move off the trail.

**Be Seen**
If you and your children are riding bikes at night, make sure the bikes have lights on them. There should be a white headlight on the front of the bike and a red reflector on the back. These are required by law! You should also use bike reflectors, reflective clothing and a bell to alert people. Being visible while riding a bike is one of the top safety precautions!

**Rules of the Road, or Path**
According to the law, cyclists get the same rights as drivers, but also must follow the same rules of the road. Cyclists must follow traffic laws and must obey street signs, lights, and signals. When riding a bike, you should use hand signals to show left and right turns and stops. The signs and other riding instructions can be viewed at [www.bikelib.org](http://www.bikelib.org).

Remember that it is important for you to make sure that your children are aware of bike safety and that they are always riding a “safe bike.” “Safe bikes” are those that have proper handle bars, seats, hand breaks, tires, chains, and petals.

Remember that it can get warm in June, so when you are outside doing physical activity, make sure to stay hydrated and drink plenty of water! Having a water bottle holder on your bike would be a good idea. You should always apply sunscreen before going on a bike ride. If both you and your children take the proper safety precautions, you are going to have a wonderful and physically active summer! Also, don’t forget to have your children to record time spent riding bikes in their physical activity logs for the month!

(Source: [www.bikelib.org](http://www.bikelib.org); [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com))