

NEWS RELEASE
Bicycle Safety

As more and more people take to roads, trails, and paths on bicycles each summer, the Cayuga County Department of Health reminds bicyclists to be safe and ride smart.

“Each year, there are about 1,675 New York State residents hospitalized due to bicycle-related injuries. Of those hospitalizations, about 31 percent involve a brain injury,” said Joan Knight, Director of Community Health Services of the Cayuga County Department of Health.

“In addition, about 40 New York State residents die each year due to a bicycle-related injuries,” she said.

New York State law requires all bicyclists under the age of 14 to wear approved bicycle helmets. Everyone should wear a helmet every time they ride a bicycle, regardless of age. Studies have shown that using bicycle helmets can reduce head injuries by up to 85 percent.

“It’s simply the most important thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash,” Knight said.

She recommended the following safety tips for buying and using bicycle helmets:

- Buy a helmet that bears a label saying it meets the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standard for bicycle helmets.
- Do not wear the helmet tilted back at an angle.
- Make sure the helmet fits snugly and does not obstruct your field of vision.
- Always wear the helmet with the chin strap firmly buckled. Make sure the chin strap fits securely and that the buckle stays fastened to provide impact protection.

No combination of twisting or pulling should remove the helmet from the head or loosen the buckle on the strap.

- Do not use a helmet after it has been involved in a crash. Damage to the helmet may not be visible to an untrained eye. Even very small cracks in the helmet may greatly reduce a helmet's effectiveness in preventing injury. Either destroy the helmet and get a new one or have the old helmet inspected by the manufacturer. The manufacturer will tell you if the helmet needs to be replaced.

Along with using safety equipment, rider actions and reactions play a major role in contributing to injury-free cycling enjoyment. These additional safety tips will help ensure safer summer cycling:

- Ride one to a bicycle.
- See and be seen. Wear bright fluorescent colors during the day.
- Avoid biking at night. If you must ride at night, equip your bicycle with head and taillights and wear reflective clothing.
- Stay alert. Watch for obstacles in your path.
- Be aware of traffic around you.
- Go with the flow. Ride with traffic.
- Keep to the right, but leave enough room to steer around road hazards and avoid car doors that may suddenly swing open.
- Regularly inspect your bike to be certain that the tires are properly inflated, spokes are tight, brakes work properly, headlight batteries are good, reflectors are in place, and the chain is lubricated and is not loose.
- Learn the rules of the road. Obey all traffic laws.
- Show your child how to use hand turn signals -- left arm straight out for a left turn, left arm bent at the elbow and hand up for a right turn, and left arm bent at the elbow and hand down for a stop.

For more information about bicycles and bike safety, call the Cayuga County Department of Health at (315) 253 1560.

BROADCAST PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS: Bicycle Safety

30 Seconds:

As more and more bicyclists take to roads, trails, and paths each summer, it's important to be safe and ride smart. Make sure your bicycle is maintained properly. Follow all traffic lights and signs, and use hand signals when turning. Always stay alert to motor vehicles, pedestrians and other cyclists. And remember, New York State law requires bicyclists under the age of 14 to wear a helmet. For more information about bicycle safety call the (local health agency name) at (telephone number). That's (telephone number).

20 Seconds:

This summer be safe and ride smart when bicycling. Follow all traffic lights and signs, and use hand signals when turning. Always stay alert to motor vehicles, pedestrians and other cyclists. And remember, New York State law requires bicyclists under the age of 14 to wear a helmet. For more information about bicycle safety call the (local health agency name) at (telephone number).

10 Seconds:

The (local health agency name) says: This summer be safe and ride smart when bicycling. Obey all traffic rules, and always wear a helmet when riding.

