

# USE YOUR HEAD WHILE CYCLING



A Natividad Medical Center Community Program

## Why Is Bicycle Safety so Important?

Bicycling injuries top the list of sports-related visits to the emergency room each year – more than half a million! About 800 bicyclists are killed each year. Even minor spills without a helmet can cause lasting damage to the brain. Young adults, 15-24, and riders 45 and older are most likely to have an accident, and most crashes happen on quiet, 25-mph neighborhood streets.

## What Are the Best Ways to Keep Safe?

- Wear a helmet – it's the most important thing to do to avoid injury or death.
- Ride in a straight line on the right, with traffic, not against it. In groups, ride single-file.
- Obey all traffic signs, signals and laws.
- Don't wear headphones or earbuds – stay alert.
- Before entering a roadway, stop and look both ways. Walk your bike across intersections.
- Watch for parked cars – a driver might suddenly pull out or open the door.
- Make eye contact with drivers so they know you're there. Stop for pedestrians.
- Keep both hands on the handlebars. Never carry a passenger on a one-seater bike.
- Don't wear loose clothing that can get caught in the chains or spokes.
- Make sure your bike has rear reflectors and a bike light, especially for night riding.

## What Do I Need to Know About Helmets?

Riders of any age should wear a helmet, but the law requires it for anyone under 18, including passengers.

### Some tips on correct fit

- The helmet must be level and snug.
- When looking up, you should see the edge of the helmet.
- The side straps should form a V around each ear.
- The strap should be tight enough that you can feel the helmet pull down when you open your mouth.

### Remember the 2V1 Rule

- 2** fingers distance from helmet edge to eyebrow
- V** shape straps around each ear
- 1** finger between chin and fastened strap

## How Do I Signal on a Bike?

It's vitally important to let drivers know your intentions.

- **LEFT turn** – Left arm straight out pointing left.
- **RIGHT turn** – Left arm bent 90 degrees at the elbow and pointing straight up, or right arm straight out pointing right.
- **STOPPING or SLOWING** – Left arm bent 90 degrees at elbow and pointing straight down, palm facing backward.

## What Do I Need to Know as a Driver?

Cyclists are exposed and defenseless, no match for an automobile at any speed. Remember to give cyclists at least 3 feet of clearance when passing, and always look behind for approaching bicycles before opening your car door.



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