



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
May 7, 2009

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National Bike Safety Month Observed in May

BISMARCK, N.D. – May is Bike Safety Month, a nationwide event observed to highlight the importance of safe bike riding, according to Diana Read, Injury/Violence Prevention director for the North Dakota Department of Health.

Each year more than one-half million bike riders are injured seriously enough to go to emergency rooms, and approximately 900 die due to bicycle-related incidents. Between 1999 and 2007, five North Dakotans died in bicycle-related accidents.

Because head injury is the leading cause of death and long-lasting impairments related to bike crashes, the Department of Health urges bike riders to wear helmets – every time they ride.

“National Bicycle Safety Month is a good time to remind all bike riders that the first and most important step in bicycle safety is wearing a helmet and wearing it correctly,” said State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D. “Wearing a helmet is the single most effective thing a person can do to avoid injury and death. That’s why everyone must make wearing a helmet a priority.”

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 50 percent of bike riders wear bike helmets in the United States. Of the 80 million people who ride bike, only 43 percent wear a helmet all the time, while 7 percent are part-time users.

“Wearing a helmet as an adult is the best way to help ensure your children wear their helmets,” Read said. “Starting the helmet habit with children at an early age increases their chances of wearing helmets when they are older.”

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

The Department of Health offers the following tips for fitting and adjusting your helmet for best use and protection:

- Wear a bicycle helmet on every bike ride. Anyone can get hurt anywhere at any time.
- Understand why a helmet is important and relay that information to your family and friends.
- Make sure the helmet fits correctly. Get professional advice about adjusting the helmet to your head. A helmet that does not fit correctly most likely won't be worn.
- Set good example for your children by wearing helmets.
- Begin a helmet habit with the first tricycle or bicycle to help it continue as your child grows.
- Be sure to include all passengers in helmet use, even children in baby carriers or trailers.
- Help your child practice putting on the helmet until he or she is able to buckle the straps easily.
- Encourage others in your environment to wear helmets, including friends and neighbors.
- Because there are different helmets for different sports, check the inside labels to make sure they meet ASTM standards for bike helmets.
- Remember that a helmet is meant to withstand one crash – after that, it should be replaced.

For more information about bike safety and how to fit a bike helmet correctly, visit www.ndhealth.gov/injury or contact Diana Read, North Dakota Department of Health, at 800.472.2286 (press 1).

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