

# **Bicycle Safety**

## **Talking Points**

### **Purchasing a Bicycle**

- Buy a bike that is the right size, not one a child has to “grow into.” Oversized bikes are especially dangerous.
- A bicycle of the wrong size may cause the child to lose control and be injured.
- Take the child with you when shopping for a bike so that he or she can try it out.
- How to test any style bike for proper fit
  - When sitting on the seat with hands on the handlebar, the child must be able to place the balls of both feet on the ground.
  - When straddling the center bar, the child should be able to keep both feet flat on the ground with about a 1-inch clearance between the crotch and the bar.
  - When buying a bike with hand breaks for an older child, make sure that the child can comfortably grasp the breaks and apply sufficient pressure to stop the bike.

### **Maintaining a Bicycle**

- Make sure the air pressure in the tires is in the recommended range printed on the side of the tire.
- Check tires for big cuts, bulges and bubbles. Also check places where the inner lining can be seen.
- Keep the chains oiled. A dry chain can lock up or break suddenly.
- Lift each wheel and give it a spin. Make sure it is not rubbing against the break pads, frame, or something else.
- **Bicycle Helmets**
- A bicycle helmet should fit comfortably and securely. It should be worn level on the head (not tilted back on the crown or pulled low over the forehead). The helmet should not be able to be moved more than an inch in any direction.
- All bicycle helmets manufactured in or imported to the United States must comply with the new Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Federal Standard. Always buy a helmet with the CPSC Standard label.
- Bicycle education programs and mandatory helmet legislation are effective in increasing helmet use.
- Parents and other caregivers need to set an example for children and always wear a helmet when bicycling.

## **Riding on the Road**

- Know local traffic laws; cyclists must obey the same rules as motorists.
- Always ride single file in the same direction as other traffic.

- Make sure the bicycle is the proper size and is safely maintained.
- Always signal your moves.
- Never wear headphones while riding; they impair your ability to hear traffic.
- Stay alert at all times (watch for other vehicles, pedestrians, potholes, cracks, expansion joints, railroad tracks, wet leaves, drainage grates).
- Communicate with motorists by making eye contact or smiling.
- Check for traffic.

## **See and Be Seen**

- Wear bright colored clothing to become more visible.
- Avoid biking at night. Young children should NOT bike at night.
- If you ride at night:
  - Use lights.
  - Ride with reflectors; they can be on your pedals, wheels, spokes and or cranks.
  - Wear retro-reflective clothing or material, especially on your ankles, wrists, back and helmet.

## Riding Rules (Young/New Riders)

- Do not push a child to ride a two-wheeled bike until he or she is ready, usually not before about age 5 or 6.
  - Consider the child's coordination and desire to learn to ride. Stick with pedal brakes until the child is older and more experienced.
  - Parent training and supervising is needed with new and young riders.
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