

Bicycle Safety



Bicycles are healthy and cost-saving alternatives for transportation and a great way to get exercise. However, despite bicycle safety programs and legislative efforts to enforce the use of bicycle helmets in some cities, our recent study, "Bicycle-Related Injuries Among Children and Adolescents in the United States" published in *Clinical Pediatrics*, found that an average of 389,300 children and adolescents 18 years and younger were treated in U.S. emergency departments for bicycle-related injuries each year between 1990-2005. That is an average of 850 bicycle-related-injuries every day. This is evidence that prevention of bicycle-related injuries should remain a national priority.

Bicycle-Related Injury Statistics

- The most common types of injuries include scrapes and bruises, cuts, and fractures.
- The upper extremities (shoulder, arm, wrist, hand, and fingers) and lower extremities (leg, ankle, foot and toes) were the most commonly injured followed by the head and face.
- Children with head injuries were 3 times more likely to require hospitalization and almost 6 times more likely to have their injuries result in death than patients with injuries to other parts of the body.

Who Is at Risk?

- Males experienced 70 percent of injuries.
- Children aged 5 through 14 years had 77 percent of the injuries.
- Adolescents aged 15 through 18 years accounted for 12 percent of all injuries, but 35 percent of fatalities. This age group is 4 times more likely to sustain a fatal injury.
- Eighty-eight percent of fatalities, with a recorded location, occurred on the street.

Prevention Tips

- ☑ Always wear a helmet.
- ☑ Ride with traffic. Stay to the right. Do not swerve into traffic.
- ☑ Follow all traffic signs. Stop at red lights and stop signs.
- ☑ Use hand signals to let car drivers know what you plan to do.
- ☑ Walk the bike across busy streets and intersections. Look left, right, and left again before crossing.
- ☑ Do not ride at dusk or after dark.
- ☑ Children less than 1 year of age should not be passengers on bicycles, as their neck muscles may not be strong enough to control head movement during a sudden stop, especially with the added weight of a helmet.
- ☑ Safety experts advise that children under 10 years old ride on a sidewalk or bike path instead of in the street. Most young children are unable to dependably make safe choices in traffic situations.

For more information, please contact the Center for Injury Research and Policy in The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital at (614) 722-2400, www.injurycenter.org or CIRP.info@nationwidechildrens.org.

Center for Injury Research and Policy

The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital

their world, made safe

