



**University of North Carolina Wilmington
Abrons Student Health Center**

INSTRUCTION SHEET: BIKE HELMETS

The Student Health Center staff is concerned about your health. We are happy to serve you, but we prefer that you *avoid* injuries and unnecessary visits to the Student Health Center.

Years of practice in the Student Health Center have convinced us that the best medicine is preventive.

As such, we offer the following advice: Wear a bike helmet whenever you ride your bike – even if you are just going for a short ride on campus.

Consider the facts:

1. A total of 770 bicyclists were killed in crashes with motor vehicles in 2006. Ninety-five percent of bicyclists killed in 2006 reportedly weren't wearing helmets. ¹
2. Two percent of motor vehicle-related deaths are bicyclists. The most serious injuries among a majority of those killed are to the head, highlighting the importance of wearing a bicycle helmet. Helmet use has been estimated to reduce head injury risk by 85 percent. ¹
3. Helmets are important for riders of all ages, especially because 85 percent of bicycle deaths are persons 16 and older. ²
4. About 540,000 bicyclists visit emergency rooms with injuries every year. Of those, about 67,000 have head injuries, and 27,000 have injuries serious enough to be hospitalized. ³
5. Experts estimate that if bikers routinely wore helmets, one death per day and one head injury every four minutes could be prevented.
6. A broken bone can be fixed; a broken brain can not. Neurosurgery (brain surgery) is never perfect: Only God can make a new brain.
7. Tetanus and meningitis vaccines are routinely given to prevent tetanus (lockjaw) and bacterial meningitis (brain infection). We routinely vaccinate our children and young adults, yet the death rate from bicycling injuries is much higher than the death rate from meningitis and tetanus combined. Shouldn't we wear bike helmets at all times? Shouldn't we set a good example for children by wearing bike helmets?

Be smart, wear a bike helmet!

Sources

1. U.S. Department of Transportation's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS)
2. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Fatality Facts: Bicycles – 2006
3. Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute