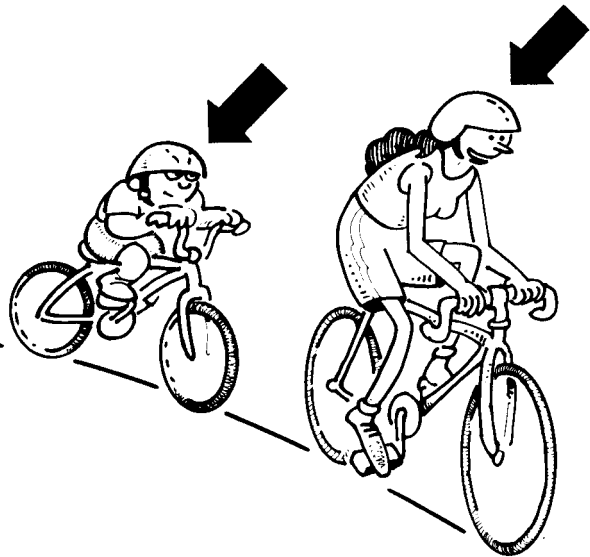


**Bike  
Helmets  
Save Lives!**  
*& it's the Law!*



# Bike Helmets Save Lives!

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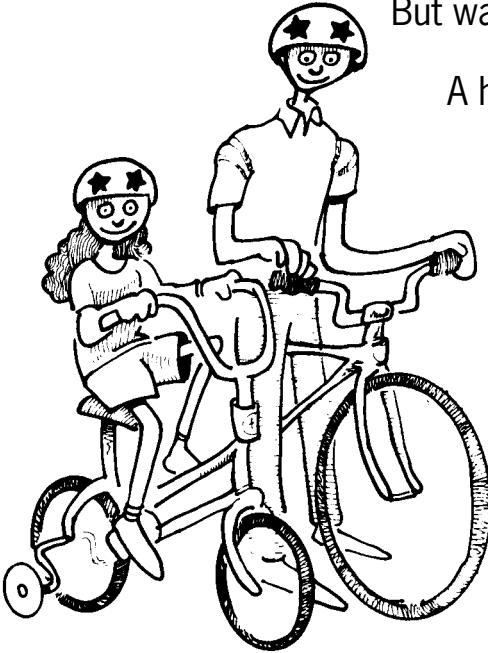
It's bicycle season. The tires are pumped up, the chain has been cleaned. Maybe you'll even give in and buy your youngest those cycling shorts with the neon green stripe down the side.

But wait, there's something missing.

A helmet.

Without a helmet, anyone who rides a bike simply isn't geared up for safety.

So, when you're going biking, **Head Out with a Helmet.**



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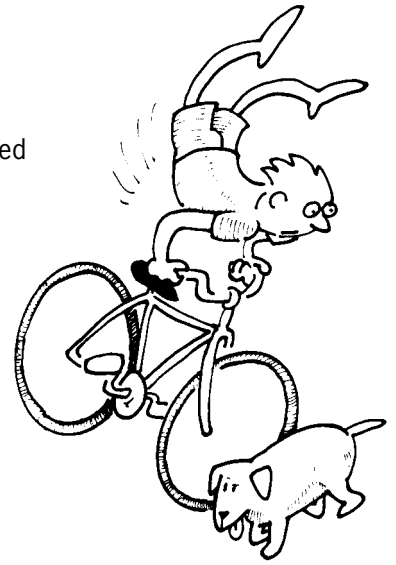
## Bicycle Helmet Law:

By law, all bicyclists under the age of 14 are required to wear approved bicycle helmets when bicycling or riding as passengers on bicycles in New York State. The maximum penalty for an offense is a \$50 fine. However, if a parent can prove that a helmet has been obtained, the fine will be waived.

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## Consider the following facts:

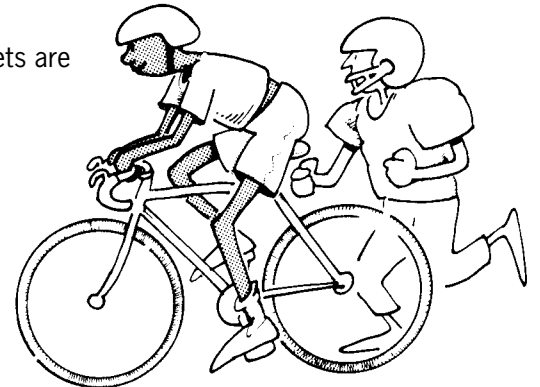
- ★ Each year, about 50 New York State residents are killed in bicycle crashes.
- ★ Each year, about 2,200 New York State residents are hospitalized due to bicycle-related injuries. Of these hospitalizations, approximately 38 percent involve a brain injury.
- ★ Nearly 75 percent of bicyclists injured nationwide are hospitalized for treatment of head injuries. Those who survive have only a 33 percent chance of recovery without disability.



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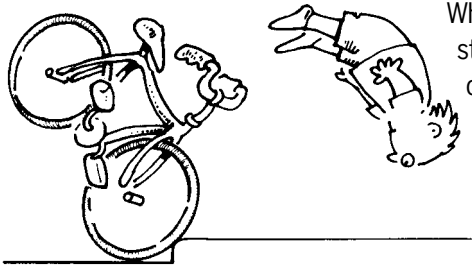
## Why wear helmets?

- ★ Professional and amateur athletes in many sports wear helmets. Football, hockey and even baseball players wear helmets. Cyclists need protection for the special risks they face, too.
- ★ Brain injuries are usually the most serious injuries a bicycle rider will sustain. Helmets prevent many of these injuries or reduce their severity.
- ★ Studies in the U.S. and elsewhere have shown that bike riders wearing helmets are less likely to suffer brain injuries than those who don't.
- ★ Bicycles, even when in the hands of young children, can be rapidly moving vehicles, easily reaching speeds of 20 miles per hour or more.
- ★ Compared to the dollar and human cost of brain injuries, helmets are inexpensive insurance.



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## How can helmets help?



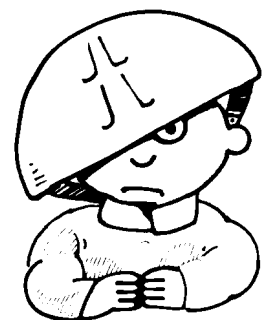
When your head hits the ground, your skull stops but your brain continues to travel, crashing against the skull. The impact of the brain against the skull bruises and damages delicate brain tissue. It often results in lifelong changes in the way you think, act, feel and move.

Helmets absorb the shock of the impact, and prevent or reduce the severity of the crash between the brain and skull.

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## What should you look for when buying a helmet?

- ★ Only buy helmets that have passed the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) or Snell Memorial Foundation safety tests. Both hard and soft shell helmets undergo testing by these organizations.
- ★ A helmet must be constructed with thick, firm polystyrene or other shock-absorbing material. This is the essential safety ingredient. It is the polystyrene that crushes on impact to absorb the shock of the fall and reduce the likelihood of brain injury. Many helmets have foam pads. These are used for comfort and sizing. They do not provide crash protection.
- ★ A helmet must have a strong strap and fastener to assure it will stay on in a crash.
- ★ Try on a helmet and adjust the straps to fit snugly. The helmet should cover the top of the forehead to be in the proper position. It should have only limited movement front to back and up and down. If the helmet cannot be adjusted to minimize both types of movement, try another size, style or brand. A helmet that isn't worn properly won't protect a rider in a crash.
- ★ If you fall and hit your head, your helmet has served its purpose. Don't use it again. Your helmet's essential shock-absorbing material that protects your head in a crash may not retain its cushioning properties after a fall. That damage is not always apparent. Either have your helmet checked by the manufacturer to make sure it's still usable or buy a new one.



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## Are there other safety precautions to take when riding a bicycle?

Absolutely. Here are some basic rules of the road:

- ★ Always ride with traffic.
- ★ Ride one to a bike.
- ★ Follow all traffic lights and signs. Signal all turns.
- ★ Ride single file.
- ★ Use a horn or bell.
- ★ Make sure your bike is in good working order.
- ★ If you're riding at night, make sure your bike has reflectors and a headlight and taillight. Consider using additional lighting and reflective bands, vests and clothing to increase your visibility.
- ★ Keep to the right, but leave enough room to steer around road hazards and avoid car doors that may suddenly swing open.



State of New York  
Department of Health