UMC Emergency Department and Trauma Team Newsletter

Accident Prevention Tips

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Each month we provide information and tips on how to reduce and prevent injuries. This month, we focus on bicycle safety. Cycling is good for your body as well as for the environment. It is a wonderful way to improve cardiovascular health, condition muscles, and burn calories. Riding your bicycle to work or to do errands is also an excellent way to help reduce local traffic, preserve fuel, and cut down on auto emissions that pollute our air. Unfortunately, more than a million cyclists fall victim to accidents each year. In many of these cases, these accidents could have been avoided with a few simple bicycle safety precautions.

Wear a Helmet

Whether or not an automobile is involved in accident with a cyclist, the vast majority of bicycle fatalities are due to head injuries. Recent studies indicate that wearing a helmet can reduce the risk of head injuries in the victim by more than 60 percent. When you are riding a bike, your age doesn’t matter! Always wear a helmet—it can save your life.

Be Alert

Whether you are riding your bicycle during the day or at night, drivers may not see you. Always do your best to wear bright, reflective clothing, stay in bicycle lanes if possible, obey all traffic rules, and equip your bike with lights and reflectors. This is particularly important for night cycling. It is imperative that you are clearly visible at night. Ride single file if you are cycling with a friend. Avoid cycling on rough road surfaces with potholes and stay away from construction sites or narrow, heavily congested roads that lack bicycle lanes. Don’t wear headphones that block out traffic noise—you need to be able to hear cars and be alert to your surroundings at all times. Look for drivers who may be backing their cars out of driveways, or opening their car doors in your path.

Don’t assume a driver sees you. Be cautious, be alert, and stay safe.