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Topic for the Month:

Bicycle Safety

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Bicycle Helmets - a no-brainer: Over the past several decades, our society has come to associate helmet use with bicycle safety. This is a good thing. There is no question that the use of a bicycle helmet can reduce the risk of a serious head injury. A bicycle helmet is the only head protection a cyclist has in the event of a crash. The bicycle helmet serves the function of an air bag for the brain. Without a helmet, the risks of sustaining a serious head injury are increased.

The Facts: There are 85 million bicycle riders in the United States. About 540,000 bicyclists visit emergency rooms every year. Of those, about 67,000 have head injuries and 27,000 have injuries serious enough to be hospitalized. In 2005, 720 bicyclists died in crashes with motor vehicles. Two-thirds of the deaths are from traumatic brain injury. Bicycle helmets have been shown to reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88 percent. The direct costs of cyclists' injuries due to not using helmets are estimated at \$81 million each year. Indirect costs of cyclists' injuries due to not using helmets are estimated at \$2.3 billion each year.

Some states are taking these statistics seriously and are mandating the use of bicycle helmets. Currently, 19 states, the District of Columbia and numerous localities have enacted some form of bicycle helmet legislation. Most legislation only covers young riders.

A short bike ride does not mean the ride is without danger. Nearly 60 percent of all childhood bicycle-related deaths occur on minor roads. The typical bicycle/motor vehicle crash occurs within one mile of the cyclists' home.

Bicycle Safety: There is more to bicycle safety than just wearing a helmet. The use of a helmet does not prevent crashes. Congestion on the roadways as well as distractions like cell phones has made drivers of motor vehicles less attentive. While cycling can be enjoyable, it requires vigilance and knowledge of the rules of the road. This knowledge is not acquired, it needs to be taught. The first rule of safety is simple - always wear a bicycle helmet. The nominal amount of money spent on a bicycle helmet can be viewed as a low cost form of life insurance. Invest in you and your child and your future together.



To keep young cyclists safe, the National Highway Transportation Administration advises:

- Insist that your child WEAR A HELMET every time he/she rides a bicycle. Make no exceptions to this rule, no matter how short the ride.
- SET A GOOD EXAMPLE - wear a helmet yourself.
- CHOICE IS GOOD. Let your child choose a helmet.
- SEE and BE SEEN. Wear bright clothes so you can be seen. Check your child's bicycle for correct fit, properly working parts, tire pressure and reflectors (on the front, rear and pedals).
- TEACH your child to look left-right-left before entering the roadway or intersection.
- STAY ALERT. There are many things that can make you fall off of a bike if you are not paying attention. Be alert for potholes, cracks, expansion joints, railroad tracks, wet leaves etc.
- Do not RIDE at NIGHT. Visibility is extremely limited and drivers are not looking for cyclists. If you must ride at night, wear reflective clothing; use a bright headlight and flashing taillight. ALWAYS assume that you cannot be seen by a driver.
- Never let your child ride a bicycle while listening to AUDIO HEADPHONES (i.e. iPods). Listening to music while biking can be just as distracting as being on a cell phone while driving a motor vehicle.
- RIDE DEFENSIVELY - you must assume that a driver does not see you or your child.

Our Firm is Committed to Promoting Bicycle Safety: As part of our bicycle safety program, our firm **will donate a Giro bicycle helmet to any of our existing or former clients.** These are high quality bicycle helmets. If you are interested in this limited time offer, just call one of our bicycle safety guys (attorneys Steve Hitzeman or Bob Janssen) to make arrangements to pick up a complimentary helmet. The sooner you call, the better, as supplies are limited.

Our supply of helmets was purchased at the **Bike Hub**. The owners of the **Bike Hub** have offered to help anyone who needs assistance adjusting the fit of a donated helmet. The **Bike Hub** is located in De Pere, on the Fox River Trail. We want to thank the **Bike Hub** for their contribution to our bicycle safety program.

THE BIKE HUB.