

HELMETS

MS 2 A

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

HELMET LAW: If you are under 18 you can get a ticket for not wearing a helmet just like you can get a ticket for not wearing a seatbelt.

CAVC 21212: All young persons under the age of 18 must wear a bicycle helmet while riding a bike.

The fine for not wearing a helmet is \$25.00 the first time. The second time it goes up to \$65.00. Court costs and paying for a bicycle skills class can take the amount up to as much as \$125.00! Wearing your helmet unclipped is the same as not wearing a helmet in the eyes of the law.

HELMETS: Not only is wearing a helmet the law; it is also a good idea. Some people will say that helmets are not cool. Brain damage is not cool. 900 people die each year in bicycle collisions, 75% of them from head injuries. 80% of all cyclist brain injuries could be avoided by wearing a helmet. Just as important as wearing a helmet is having it adjusted correctly. It is said that when you crash, your head does

not just hit the ground one time. It is more like skipping stones: your head bounces.

On average your head bounces 3 times in an accident. If you do not have your helmet clipped, on the first bounce your helmet falls off. Then it is not there to protect you on the other bounces.

Another common mistake is having your helmet adjusted too loosely or adjusted so your forehead is exposed. If your helmet is sitting on the back of your head, what do you think the chances are that it will protect your forehead in a crash? None! If the strap is loose, your helmet moves on the first impact and will not be there for the other bounces. A common question kids often ask is "What is the difference between skateboard helmets and bicycle helmets?" If you are in a skateboard crash you are more likely to fall backwards and hit the back of your head. That is why skateboard or multipurpose helmets look the way they do. They work fine when you are on a bicycle as well. Bike helmets are made to be aerodynamic. They don't work as well when you are on a skateboard. The shiny plastic cover serves a purpose as well. It is designed to slide. If you are being dragged by a car you want your helmet to move with you. You do not

want your head and your body to move in opposite directions. The foam inside is what protects you from impact. It absorbs the force of the crash. After a crash, you should always replace your helmet. In fact you should replace your helmet every 5 years even if you don't get in a crash. The high density foam degrades over time. When you get a new helmet make sure it has the CPSC tag on the inside. This tag means that your helmet has passed safety inspection. Keep this in mind: **Your helmet is your single most important piece of safety equipment.**

ADJUSTING A HELMET: Adjusting a helmet is not as hard as it might seem. The first thing you need to do is make sure it fits on your head. It should not be so tight that it doesn't go on easily but it should not be so loose that it wiggles around. Some helmets come with different widths of foam padding so you can adjust the size.



STANDARDS

- CA.H.6.S.8.1 Support injury prevention at school, at home, and in the community.
- CA.H.6.S.8.3 Encourage others to practice safe behaviors, including the proper use of safety belts when riding in cars, wearing helmets when riding bicycles, and wearing mouth guards when participating in athletic activities.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase awareness of bicycle law.
- Understand why a helmet is important.
- Demonstrate the proper way to size a helmet.
- Demonstrate the proper way to adjust a helmet.

MATERIALS

- Demonstration helmet
- Helmet that has been in an accident
- Helmet adjusting poster
- Helmet crossword Puzzle
- Jello in a Jar DVD
- Wear a Helmet DVD

Others have a plastic knob or strap in the back for easy adjustment. Once you have the helmet secure on your head you need to make sure the straps are adjusted correctly. There are 3 things to do to make sure your straps are well adjusted.

1. The helmet needs to be down low on your forehead. There should be no more than a two finger distance between your eyebrow and the bottom of your helmet.
2. The straps need to make a 'V' under your ear. One of the most common misadjusts is to have the 'V' down by the chin. It needs to be right below the ear. (Use the same two fingers to demonstrate where the 'V' in the strap should be.) Having the 'V' in the correct position helps keep the helmet in place when you crash.
3. Lastly, you need no more than a two finger space between your chin and the chin strap. Many people, particularly teens, wear their helmets so loose you can fit a whole fist in between the strap and the chin. When a helmet is loose it can fly right off your head. You do not want it so tight it is uncomfortable but you do want it to stay on. Another way to test to see if the helmet is tight enough is to open your mouth. When you open your mouth wide the strap should be tight enough that you can feel the helmet move slightly. If the strap is so loose it does not move when you do, it needs to be tightened.

ACTIVITIES

There are several activities you can do to accompany a class discussion of helmet safety to reinforce the idea. If you are spending half a class period on helmet safety you may only have time for a helmet fitting demonstration. If you have a full class period, you might want to encourage students to

bring their own helmets to school. Offer an incentive to help them remember. Choose the activities that best fit the needs of your student population.

TEACHING TIPS While you are talking with students about helmets, show them both the demonstration helmet and the crash helmet. When you show them the crash helmet, point out the different places where you can see the helmet absorbed the impact. Have students discuss what a head would have looked like if the helmet hadn't been there.

When you are talking about helmets and the law, have students guess what the fine is for not wearing a helmet. Give them a thumbs up or a thumbs down if the amount is too low or too high. Have them keep guessing until they get the right amount. Do it again for the increased second offense fine. Ask a student how much their allowance is. Have them calculate the number of weeks it would take to pay off the fine.

Ask students if they have ever crashed on their bike. Did they have a helmet? Did the helmet make a difference? Often if the helmet did not make a difference it was because it was not adjusted correctly. Do they know anybody who was in a crash where a helmet made a difference? Students love to talk about personal experience.

HELMET FITTING This demonstration works best when students have brought helmets to school or if you have a student who rode their bike to school that day. If you have a full class period for helmets, encourage students to bring helmets to school. Send home reminders the day before. Review helmet adjustments with the students. Then ask for a volunteer to come up and adjust their helmet in front of the class. Next have students work in pairs or teams of three and adjust each other's helmets. Either make copies of the helmet adjusting poster or put it up on an overhead for students to follow. If you do not have a student who brought a helmet to school, use a demonstration

helmet.

EGG DROP DEMONSTRATION This is a great demonstration, however, it is also part of the Standard Stroll 4th grade curriculum. You may want to check with your class to see how many students are familiar with it before planning this activity with your class.

Explain to students that you are going to use eggs to demonstrate the ideas you have just been talking about. The egg helmet is made of the same high density foam as helmets are. The duct tape acts the same way the shiny plastic cover does.

Draw a face on an egg (or ask a volunteer to do it). This is Eggbert.

Eggbert likes to ride his bike but he does not like to wear his helmet. Make up a story. Here is an example. Eggbert was out on day having fun on his bike. He jumped over a curb and crashed. When he crashed his head hit the sidewalk.

When you get to the part of the story where Eggbert crashes, drop the egg into the bowl (ask for a student volunteer to do this.) The egg will crack.

Draw a face on another egg. This is Shellina. She always wears her helmet. Put the egg helmet on Shellina. Make up a story about her bike ride. Have a student drop the egg on the floor. Then take the helmet off and show that the egg is still ok.

Egg Drop MATERIALS

- Two eggs
- Sharpie pen
- Egg helmet (SRTS has loaner helmets)
- Bowl

Sometimes the 2nd egg will crack. If this happens, talk to students about the idea that there are some crashes where a helmet does not protect you. 80% of the time, helmets protect the brain from injury, which means that injuries still happen 20% of the time. You also can look at the differences in the severity of the crashes. Eggbert usually cracks into several pieces and the insides are visible. If Shellina cracks it usually is a smaller hairline fracture. Discuss the differences in the severity of the accidents.

JELLO IN A JAR VIDEO This is the first video on the SRTS DVD. It is 8 minutes long. It has general information about riding safely, an interview with a kid who was hit by a car and a helmet demonstration similar to the egg drop with jello and a jar instead of an egg.

WEAR A HELMET VIDEO This video is about skateboard helmets. It is the personal story of a teen who crashed. It is a powerful, high impact story. The student has to relearn many basic skills. It is the 4th video on the SRTS DVD and it is 4 minutes long.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE This can either be an in class activity with students working in pairs or given as homework. Hard copy only, request copies from SRTS .

GEAR UP RELAY Like the egg drop this game appears elsewhere in the curriculum. It is fun for all ages. If you want to do a more in-depth discussion of gear, see the Gear-Up supplemental lesson (MS 9).

Divide the students into teams. There should be an equal number of students on each team and each team should represent a variety of skills and abilities.

Teams line up at the start line. Explain to the students that they will need to put on the different cycling gear and run to the turn around line. At the turn around line they need to take a drink from the water bottle and run back to the start.

Next they need to remove the gear and the next person in line needs to gear up. They can help each other gear up but only one person at a time can be over the start line. They need to check their teammate before they run to make sure they are geared up correctly.

Review the different types of gear. Make sure students know; what the gear are, how to use it correctly and why it helps to keep them safe when they are riding.

A team finishes when everybody has had a turn to gear up and run.

Play until all teams are finished. Encourage students to cheer on their teammates and support each other to see teammates are geared up correctly before they run.

Gear-Up Relay MATERIALS

SRTS has loaner materials. Please ask ahead to insure availability.

- Cones: To mark the race course. Two for each team. Chalk works as well.
- 3-6 helmets: One for each team.
- 3-6 reflective vests: One for each team.
- 6-12 ankle bands: Two for each team.
- 3-6 water bottles: One for each team.