

HEALTH IN OUR HANDS!

The Arkansas State University Wellness Program Newsletter
www.astate.edu/conhp



Bike Safety

Introduction

Spring means warmer weather and more time spent outside. A great way to enjoy a spring day is to ride a bicycle. Arkansas State University has been named a Bicycle Friendly University by the League of American Bicyclists. The PAC Paths and the new LimeBikes on campus make riding a bike convenient and affordable. They also make awareness of bicycle safety increasingly important.

Bicycle Safety Statistics

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- Bicyclists accounted for 2% of all traffic deaths in 2014
- Bicyclists accounted for 2% of all crash-related injuries in 2014
- Bicyclist deaths occurred most often between 6 and 9 p.m. (20%) and in urban areas (71%)
- 88% of the bicyclists killed were male

- The largest number of males injured were between 20 to 24 years old
- About 1 in 5 bicyclists killed in crashes had blood alcohol concentrations above the legal alcohol level

As a college campus, these statistics are relevant. Men age 20 to 24 make up a large portion of our student population. It is also important to remember that drinking and driving a bike is not safe. Awareness of these statistics can improve bicycle safety.

Safety Strategies

There are many things you can do as a cyclist to increase safety and decrease the risk of crashes and injury. Correct helmet size and fit are important to ensure proper head protection in the case of a crash. Also, there are strategies to avoid crashes and be proactive when riding. In addition, car drivers need to be educated on sharing the road with cyclists.

How to Fit a Bike Helmet

According to the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, the goal in buying and fitting a helmet are for the helmet to be snug, level, and stable. Some steps to ensure the fit is correct include:

1. Adjust the pads/ring
2. Adjust the straps
3. Use the "Eye-Ear-Mouth" test developed by the Bicycle Coalition of Maine:
 - Looking upward, the rim should be barely visible to your eye
 - The "Y" of the side straps should meet just below your ear
 - The chin strap should be snug against the chin so that opening your mouth wide pulls the helmet down slightly

For more information about bicycle helmets, including buying a helmet, current research, and more, visit their website at www.helmets.org.

Safety for Bikers

Bicycle crashes can occur as a result of both falling off of the bike and a collision with a motor vehicle. It is important to know that cyclists are required to follow the same laws as motorists on highways. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has some suggestions for a cyclist to take to increase bike safety and decrease the risk of crashes:

- Be prepared.
 - Ride a bike that works and fits you.
 - Wear protective equipment that works and fits you.
 - Make sure your shoelaces are tied.
 - Plan your route beforehand keeping in mind access to bike lanes and bike paths.
- Drive defensively.
 - Be focused and alert at all times.
 - Drive in the same direction as traffic.
 - Obey street signs, signals, and markings just like you would if driving a car.
 - Assume the other person does not see you.
 - Look ahead for hazards.
 - Focus on riding and do not text or be distracted while riding.
 - Announce your intentions before passing a pedestrian by using a term like “passing on your left.”
 - Be on the lookout for cars backing out of places or crossing at intersections.
- Drive predictably.
 - If the other person can anticipate what you are going to do, you can both react to avoid a crash if needed.
 - Ride where you are expected.
 - Avoid or minimize sidewalk riding if possible.
- Improve your riding skills.
 - If you are new to riding a bike in an urban area, begin somewhere safe, without traffic.
 - Practice safe riding and the use of communication and navigation.

Share the Road

Bicycle safety is not only up to the cyclists, but also the drivers on the roads. Be aware of cyclists and yield to them as if they are driving a car. Look both ways, in front of you, and behind you before making a turn. Remember, if there is a bike lane, they will be traveling on your right. Practice safe driving and obey traffic laws and speed limits. And always, allow the cyclist enough room when passing them in a vehicle.

Biking in Our Community

The new Limebikes are all over campus. They are a fun, convenient, and affordable way to get around campus and even around town. To utilize the Limebikes, download their application from your smart phone’s app store. You can then use the app to find a bike, scan it, pay for it to unlock it, and ride it. When you are done, just park it and lock it. They are equipped

with lights and a basket for safety and convenience. Cost to use them is fifty cents per half hour for students.

We also have Pedestrian and Cyclist (PAC) paths open to bike riders on campus. The Campus Loop is ideal for cyclists and includes over 3 miles of path. The paths are open to everyone in the community and are a great way to safely ride a bike. A map of the PAC paths can be found at <http://www.astate.edu/dotAsset/b20c3b5c-bfab-46bd-b05b-a0c67fc0c0c2.pdf>.

Another fun way to ride a bicycle is in a group. Gearhead Cycle House runs a weekly ride at 7:30 a.m. each Saturday morning. A map and more information can be found at <http://gearheadcyclehouse.com>.

References

- <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/bicycle-safety>
- <https://helmets.org/fit.htm>
- <https://www.astate.edu/news/bicycl-e-sharing-coming-to-a-state-with-limebike>
- <http://www.limebike.com>
- <http://gearheadcyclehouse.com>

Other News:

**If you have any suggestions for newsletter topics, please contact Dean Susan Hanrahan at hanrahan@astate.edu.

The Arkansas State University Employee Wellness Newsletter is published monthly during the academic year by the College of Nursing and Health Professions. Health questions can be addressed to Dean Susan Hanrahan, Ph.D., ext. 3112 or hanrahan@astate.edu. Produced by Katie Sellers, graduate student in the College of Nursing and Health Professions, Physical Therapy Program.