

# HEALTH IN OUR HANDS!

The Arkansas State University Wellness Program Newsletter  
[www.astate.edu/conhp](http://www.astate.edu/conhp)



## “Bicycle Safety”

### Overview

In the spring and summer months, more people can be seen riding their bicycles—whether for exercise, recreation, or commuting to work. From 2000 to 2012, the number of Americans traveling to work by bicycle increased from 488,000 to about 786,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, May 2014). While riding a bicycle can have many health and financial benefits, there are also dangers associated with other vehicles or cyclists.

### Statistics

Bicyclists accounted for 2 percent of all traffic fatalities and 2 percent of all crash-related injuries in 2012. Most bicyclist fatalities occurred between 4 p.m. and midnight (48%) and in urban areas (69%). Almost 9 in 10 (88%) of those killed while riding bicycles were male. One in

four bicyclists (24%) who died in crashes had blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) of .08 or higher, the illegal alcohol level in all States. Many crashes could be avoided if all bicyclists and motorists followed the rules of the road.

### Cyclists Can

- **Be predictable.** Signal your intentions to others (use hand signals, look over your shoulder before changing lanes, ride in a straight line on the right side of the road). Expect that other vehicles do not see you.

- **Go with the flow of traffic, not against it.**

Drivers are not expecting to see bicyclists approaching them from the front, to make sudden turns across several lanes, or to come out from between parked cars or behind shrubbery.

- **Be ready to stop at driveways and intersections.** This is easier to do if you are not distracted by electronic devices. We need to be alert to pick up information about traffic around us, so do not put yourself at a disadvantage by texting or by using ear buds or headphones while you’re riding.
- **Watch for uneven pavement, potholes, wet leaves, storm grates or other roadway changes that could cause you to lose balance.** Ride on bike paths and bike trails if they are available in your community and give parked cars about a 3-foot berth in case someone opens a door in your path. If you are riding on a sidewalk, you must yield to pedestrians and it is a good idea to let them know you are about to pass them. Riding on a sidewalk

may not be a safe or legal place to ride.

- **Make yourself and your bicycle visible at all times, especially at night** and in dim light by wearing bright, reflective clothing, and using white lights in front and red reflectors or lights in the rear as required by all States.

### Drivers Can

- **Be predictable.** Signal your intentions to others and anticipate what other road users may do.
- **Turn off cell phones.**
- **Allow enough room when passing bicyclists**, as you would when passing another vehicle. A single lane does not allow enough room for both a bicycle and your vehicle. Give extra room around children on bicycles because they can be unpredictable.
- **Stop and give assistance if you strike a bicyclist, call 911 as necessary.** Driving away from the crash constitutes a hit- and-run which is a serious crime in all States.

### Helmet Fitting

**Step 1:** Measure your head to find your size. Try on several helmets in your size until one feels right.

**Step 2:** The helmet should sit level on your head and low on

your forehead— one or two finger-width above your eyebrow.

**Step 3:** Adjust the slider on both straps to form a “V” shape under, and slightly in front of, the ears. Lock the slider if possible.

**Step 4:** Center the left buckle under the chin. Buckle your chin strap. Tighten the strap until it is snug, so that no more than one or two fingers fit under the strap.

**Step 5:** Does your helmet fit right? Open your mouth wide...big yawn! The helmet should pull down on your head. If not, refer back to step 4 and tighten the chin strap.

### Helmet Safety

- Replace your helmet when it has been in a crash; damage is not always visible.
- Buy a helmet that fits your head now, not a helmet to “grow into.”
- If you buy a helmet that you find comfortable and attractive, you are more likely to wear it. Readjust as necessary to ensure the helmet fits properly each ride.
- Adjust the helmet fitting based on your helmet first being in the correct position, level on the head and low on your forehead.

- Everyone — adult and child — should wear a bicycle helmet each time they ride. Wearing a helmet each ride can encourage the same smart behavior in others.

### References

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Bicycles>

### Other News:

\*\*If you have any suggestions for newsletter topics, please contact Dean Susan Hanrahan at [hanrahan@astate.edu](mailto: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](mailto:hanrahan@astate.edu). Produced by Kelsie Clark, graduate student in the College of Nursing and Health Professions, Physical Therapy Program.