



SAFE ROUTE NEWS

Volume 2, Issue 3

June/July/Aug 09

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

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Kids and Traffic: Walking and Biking Safely

NHTSA Safety Tips for Children and PEDS Kids Walk

Summer is the perfect time for parents to work on walking and bicycle safety skills with their children

It is important to remember that kids see and hear the world differently than adults. This simple fact can make it difficult for adults to impress upon children the dangers of traffic and the impact it can have on them.

The following nine facts will help you as you work with your kids on their walking and bicycling safety skills.

1. Kids don't understand that a car can't stop as quickly as they can.
2. Kids have trouble judging traffic speed, gaps in traffic, or whether a car is coming, going or standing

still.

3. Kids mistakenly think that if they can see a car, then the driver can see them, even if they are standing behind a shrub or parked car.
4. Kids don't realize that drivers are paying attention to many things and aren't focused on just them.
5. Kids are short; drivers don't see them as easily.
6. Kids have limited ability to detect traffic in their peripheral vision or recognize the sound of oncoming cars.
7. Kids focus on one thing

at a time. When they're concentrating on a ball game in their yard, they're not thinking about nearby traffic.



8. Children don't have the skill to handle traffic situations until about age 10.

9. Children often act before thinking and may not do what parents or drivers expect.

Teach by Example!

For children under nine, classroom exercises about pedestrian safety tend to go in one ear and out the other. To help (cont. on page 2)

Dates to Remember:

September 14, 2009 Round 3 Applications cycle opens

October 7, 2009 SD Schools Walk and International Walk to School Day



Confessions of a Terrified Bike Rider Angela Olson SD SRTS

Coordinator

I took this job 20 months ago holding back a terrible secret that I am now ready to share with readers of this newsletter.

I, Angela Olson, Safe Routes to School Coordinator was terrified of riding bikes. Not even my family knew of my

unreasonable fear.

When my children were young I was supportive in the effort to get my children on bikes. I even went on those family bike rides, always as the caboose (out of fear) and using a bad knee as an excuse not to ride too fast, too far,

too much.

The guilt of taking on this job and being a terrified bike rider was too much and I shared my secret with my husband who promptly took it upon himself to "fix the problem."

(cont. page 2)

Kids and Traffic: Walking and Biking Safely *cont. from page 1*

your children learn safe walking and bicycling skills, teach by example and practice safe walking/bicycling skills with them.

- Walk on a sidewalk whenever possible.
- When walking on the side of the street, walk facing traffic so you can see oncoming cars.

Ride Right, Walk Left

One of the leading causes of cycling accidents is wrong-way riding. Motorists expect to find other traffic on the right side of the road so they look where they expect traffic

- When riding a bike, ride with the direction of the traffic (ride right,

walk left).

- Show them how to stop at the edge of the street and look LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT before crossing the street, even when a pedestrian signal says "WALK."
- Watch for turning cars.
- Prevent horseplay, especially when walking with a group of children.
- Be extra alert in bad weather.
- When riding a bike obey the traffic laws. Remember, a child's bicycle is their first vehicle.
- Train children to wear helmets at the beginning. Make a rule: no helmet, no bike.
- Obey traffic control devices: cyclists,

just like motorists, must obey all traffic control devices.

Children imitate and model their behavior after adults, so your actions while walking and biking speak louder than your words.

While these are all commonsense practices, they are often neglected and need to be reviewed frequently with our children to instill lifelong safety habits.

Resources:

PEDS KidsWalk Resources

<http://peds.org/resources/flyers/>

NHTSA Safety Tips for Children

<http://204.68.195.250/people/injury/childps/newtips/>

Confessions of a Terrified Bike Rider *cont. from page 1*

This "fixing" process took on the form of lessons from my husband on bike riding fundamentals. He had me practice getting on and off the bike, starting and stopping, riding in circles and figure 8's and lots of tips and encouragement.

Next my husband fixed my knee problem. He raised the seat of my bike a little at a time letting me get used to each adjustment before he moved it up a little more. You see, I was taught to ride a bike that was far too tall for my short stature. As a child I always needed a curb to stand on so I could get on and off my bike. This led to many falls, much frustration and finally, a fear of riding a bike. When I finally had the courage to get back on a bike, I wanted to be as close to the ground as possible –thus the seat that was positioned way too low and a bad knee that hurt when riding a bike.

With biking fundamentals taken care of and the excuse of a painful knee gone, my husband and last child living at home re-established our little tradition of the "family bike ride." My family first

started me on a safe ride away from people and away from cars. That didn't last long; they quickly graduated me to riding near pedestrians and traffic, and would you believe it, my fear was gone?

Amazing what a little knowledge and practice can do to build self confidence.

To my surprise I love it. I am addicted to the feeling of freedom, addicted to the different view of the world as I pass by with just a little bit of speed. I am amazed at how quickly my endurance is increasing. I love how I feel after I master that last long, steep hill before we get home.

I know I have a lot of skill and experience catching up to do, but I love the process and am so grateful for a patient teacher.

During one of our rides my daughter and I rode past a very young girl all decked out in pink: pink clothes, pink bike, pink helmet. She was terrified, her training wheels had just been taken off, and she told her dad she didn't want to ride anymore. I could relate to her

tearful rejection of the bike riding experience, but I just wanted to stop and tell her not to give up. Someday she would love riding her bike, and that going without training wheels is way cool.

To the adults out there that want to learn to ride a bike, I would encourage you to find a person that is willing to teach you the fundamentals of bike riding and hold your hand through the process if needed. It's not too late: you can do it.

To the parents out there please make sure your children have a bike that fits their size. Please, teach your children the fundamentals of riding a bike and rules of the road. Please, go on those family bike rides to build their biking skills, safety skills and confidence level. Please, make it a fun, safe experience for your children. Bicycling is a wonderful life-long skill that is beneficial to them in so many ways.

Yes, I am still the caboose during our family bike rides, not out of fear, but because I just really like it that way.

Resource Highlights

Walking is still considered the number one form of healthy, continual exercise. It is free, easy to start and you can do it anywhere and anytime of the year.

It is recommended that individuals walk an average of 10,000 steps per day to maintain a healthy lifestyle which would include 30 minutes a day at a 'talking pace'. If you use walking to encourage weight loss, you need to walk between 45-60 minutes a day at a pace to increase your heart rate.

The following are two great sites full of information beneficial to those in-

involved in the SRTS program.

Mark Fenton's America's Walking

Mark Fenton is an entertaining, persuasive, and knowledgeable walking advocate; one of the nation's foremost experts on walking; the former editor-at-large of WALKING Magazine; former member of the United States national racewalking team; host of the PBS series, America's walking; author of books focusing on walking and health, and an avid Safe Routes to School advocate.

Mark Fenton's America's Walking <http://www.pbs.org/americaswalking/>

Mark Fenton's Lessons from 50K a

Day http://www.iptv.org/video/detail.cfm/423/k12_20070424_110_markfenton

America Walks is a national resource which fosters walkable communities by engaging, educating, and connecting walking advocates. America Walks provides a free training Webinar each month that specifically addresses Safe Routes to School issues. Materials from past Webinars are posted for downloading by interested viewers.

To sign up for monthly training Webinars from America Walks go to: <http://www.americawalks.org/>

Hop, Skip & Jump into the Future Thoughts by Rae Pica, Children's Physical Activity Specialist

Once upon a time, children were almost never indoors, preferring to play outside; nor were they ever still for long. They skipped and galloped, climbed trees, jumped rope, played hopscotch and rode their bicycles for blocks. They ran screaming through each other's yards and even down the middle of the streets. They played touch football, hide-and-seek, and tag. They raced each other to the slide and swings, chased butterflies, and got filthy rolling around on

the ground. It's no wonder no one ever worried about them getting enough exercise!

Today, it's the rare child who has similar experiences. Instead, children watch TV and DVDs and play, not on the slides and swings but on the computer. And they don't walk – let alone run, as we did – to and from school. They either take the bus or their parents drive them. (Parents drive their kids *everywhere* these days.) And during the school day? Well, physical edu-

cation and recess, which we had twice a day, are fast going the way of the dinosaurs.

Click the following link to read the rest of the article:



<http://www.movingandlearning.com/Resources/Articles35.htm>

Site's of Interest

SD SRTS

<http://www.sddot.com/srts/>

American Heart Association:

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtm?identifier=1477>

Don't Thump Your Melon

<http://www.sdemsc.org/dvtm.html>

SD Bicycle Coalition

<http://www.southdakotabicyclecoalition.org/>

Coordinated School Health

<http://doe.sd.gov/oess/schoolhealth/index.asp>

Healthy South Dakota

<http://www.healthysd.gov/>

Mark Fenton's America's Walking

<http://www.pbs.org/americaswalking/>

What's Happening in SRTS

Round 2 application cycle closed April 8th, 2009. Applications are now under review.

Round 3 application process opens September 14, 2009

Registration is open for South Dakota Schools Walk and International Walk to School Day

South Dakota Schools Walk registration:

<http://doe.sd.gov/oess/schoolhealth/sdwalks/registration/index.asp>

International Walk to School Day registration:

www.walktoschool.org/register and <http://www.walktoschool.org/>

2009 National SRTS Conference Portland Oregon August 19-21

<http://www.saferoutesconference.org/>

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

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We are on the Web
www.sddot.com/srts/

Where it's safe, get kids
walking and biking.
Where it's not safe,
make it safe.



September/October Newsletter Will Include:

Where are We Now?

Walk to School Month

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Issues

Putting the Brakes on Childhood Obesity

Economic Consequences of Weight Issues

Family Bike Rides

Please send pictures and news articles of your Safe Routes to School activities to: angela.olson@state.sd.us. Article ideas, comments and questions are also welcomed

Busting Biking Myths Buzz Feldman, High Gear Cyclery, Inc

Myth: Helmets make your head hot.

Busted! Okay, we admit that if it's blazing hot out and you're climbing in the sun, your head is going to get hotter in that helmet than if your melon was exposed. However, testing by all the major makers has shown that overall, up and down hills, and everywhere in-between, on average, your head actually remains cooler in a helmet. Why? For the very simple reason that modern helmets are comprised primarily of polystyrene foam—the same material found in coolers. Thanks to this super-light and excellent-insulation material, and the significant advances in venting technology, modern lids keep your head cooler most of the time, which is one of the marvels of modern cycling and why even professional riders are now riding more safely protected by these great helmets.

Why this myth exists: That tough, hot climb we were talking about, And, all those early helmets that were mostly

made of heavy plastic, and were oversize and poorly vented. They gave helmets a bad reputation in the comfort department. Worse, a lot of riders are still using these outdated models and think all helmets are still hot and uncomfortable.

Myth: Flat tires are unavoidable.

Why this myth exists: Bicycle tires are low-volume (even when fully inflated there's not a lot of air inside), and like all tires (even car tires), they naturally lose air over time due to seepage. When this happens the tires are softer than they should be and if you ride on them like this, you're much more likely to have a flat. Unfortunately, most people don't realize that you need to check the tire pressure regularly so flat tires are more common than they should be.

Busted! Only if you let them be. What we mean by this is that you can prevent flats with a little basic maintenance. If you're flattening frequently, talk to your

local bike shop so they can recommend a solution. The basic step to prevent

most flats is getting a good "floor pump" (these are easy to use with a powerful action, sturdy base and built-in pressure gauge) and topping off your tires before every ride. Also, if you ride a lot, on rugged terrain or around thorny plants, you're likely to flat more.

There are measures that can be taken to give you extra protection. Ask your local bike shop. You should also always carry a portable pump, tire levers (tire-removal tools), a spare tube and a patch kit, so you have the means to fix a flat and ride home.

<http://highgearbike.com/page.cfm?pageID=334>

