

THINKFIRST CANADA'S BICYCLING INJURY PREVENTION TIPS

It is estimated that 90% of children under the age of ten own and ride a bicycle regularly in North America. With so many of the nation's children on two wheels it's important to keep them safe. Here are ThinkFirst Canada's top tips for reducing your risk of sustaining a catastrophic injury while bicycling. This information is taken from Chapter 28 "Bicycling" in the ThinkFirst book entitled *Catastrophic Injuries in Sports and Recreation: Causes and Prevention – A Canadian Study* edited by Charles H. Tator and published by the University of Toronto Press in 2008.

TOP TIPS:

- Bicyclists of all ages should wear helmets. Attention should be given to proper fitting of the helmet. Discard the helmet after one high intensity impact. Please see our [2V1 guide](#) for useful information on fitting a helmet.
- Provincial legislation should mandate the use of helmets for bicyclists of all ages. Please see our ['snapshot of helmet legislation'](#) for provincial helmet laws.
- All road users: Be educated about and practice road safety (e.g. signaling, speed, gauging road conditions, rules of the road, etc.).
- Motorists should be aware of vulnerable road users, respect speed limits, and actively avoid contact with bicyclists.
- Ensure proper functioning of your bike, especially the brakes.
- Children should avoid areas of road traffic – especially higher speed zones.
- Use designated areas for riding when available and abide by bylaws, these are in place for your safety as well as others such as pedestrians.
- Ensure adequate visibility while riding, this includes both bright clothing at night and reflective material on the bike itself.
- Use eye protection when necessary to protect from weather and foreign bodies.



DID YOU KNOW?

- During the ThinkFirst-Tator study (2008) there was an average of 72 catastrophic injuries related to biking per year in Ontario. This translates to 2.36 Catastrophic injuries per 100,000 participants.
- According to the ThinkFirst-Tator study, children and adolescents under 20 years are at the greatest risk for catastrophic injuries from bicycling.

Risk Factors to Consider

Gender: Young males, less than 20 years of age comprised over 46% of all catastrophic injuries in bicycling during the ThinkFirst-Tator study. In fact, the total number of male catastrophic injuries is more than 3.5 times greater than the injuries in females even though participation rates are almost equal. Further, overall injury rates (lacerations, contusions, broken bones) for males and females were equal.

Equipment: Failing to wear a helmet is a primary risk factor in bicycling injuries.

Vehicles: Cycling in close proximity to motor vehicles increases risk of injury.

Riding Environment: Objects on the road and loose gravel add to the risk of injury.

Remember: thinkfirst.ca before you play!