



## Let Safety Come Full Cycle

If you're one of the millions of people in Ontario who ride a bike for fun, exercise, or simply to get from here to there, you're contributing to both your own health and the health of the environment.

Stay healthy by following the rules of the road. Like motorists, bicyclists have certain responsibilities to make their ride a safe one. Common sense should also be part of the equation when you're practicing pedal power.

Before you wheel out of the driveway, consider these tips on safe biking:

- Always wear a CSA approved helmet that fits snugly in a level position. About 75 per cent of bike-related fatalities result from head trauma, and there are many survivors with serious injuries. Keep the helmet on no matter the distance you're traveling or speed you're going. The force of hitting the pavement, even if you were standing on your feet, is enough to cause brain damage.
- Wear bright clothing during the day, and light clothing at night. Equip your bike with lights or reflector tape so others on the road can see it.
- Don't ride on the sidewalk, but in a single lane on the road. Remember your hand signals to indicate turns to other cyclists and drivers: an outstretched left arm means a left turn, a bent left arm facing up means a right turn, and a bent left arm facing down means you're stopping.
- Establish eye contact with drivers especially those making turns or pulling into traffic. Drivers are looking for approaching cars and might not see you.
- Ride with the traffic and on the right side of the road, just like any other vehicle. Riding against the traffic confuses and surprises other drivers. The same goes for riding the wrong direction on one-way streets.
- Obey traffic rules, such as stopping for lights and stop signs, stopping for pedestrians at cross walks. Disobeying the rules can endanger yourself and others.
- Don't let your guard down. Keep a close watch for possible hazards such as potholes, uneven surfaces, cars backing out of driveways or cutting in front of you, car doors open, and sewer grates.
- Look both ways before you enter a street, and get in the habit of glancing over your left shoulder to see what the traffic behind you is doing.

- Make sure that the bike is the right size for you. For proper control, you should be able to keep the balls of your feet on the ground as you straddle the bike. If the bike doesn't have a crossbar, the seat should be level with your hips. Adjust the seat height if necessary.

Information provided by Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit.  
Source: Safety Resource Center.