



# Back to School Safety Tips



The end of the summer brings new beginnings for students and an air of excitement for everyone. Unfortunately, with more children on the road each day, it also brings a rise in injuries from pedestrian, bicycle, school bus, and motor vehicle crashes. In an effort to help prevent injuries & raise an awareness of safety in everyday activities, the **Saint Francis Hospital & Medical Center Violence & Injury Prevention Program** has compiled this simple list of things motorists, parents, and students can do to reduce the risk of injuries. Enjoy the school year!



## Drivers- Be Aware!



With the increasing number of children on the road, the responsibility is on drivers to be more aware. Things to keep in mind:

- ▣ Children are small, making it difficult for them to see motorists and for motorists to see them. This is especially true around obstructions like parked or moving cars, buses and bushes.
- ▣ Children have underdeveloped peripheral vision, so a child won't see a motorist approaching from the right or left as soon as an adult will.
- ▣ Children have difficulty judging a car's speed and distance, leading them to misjudge how far away from them a moving car really is.
- ▣ Children often think, if they can see the driver, the driver can see them.
- ▣ When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to school.
- ▣ Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood. Also watch for children playing and when approaching bus stops.
- ▣ Be alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.
- ▣ Drivers need to look for pedestrians as well as cars when turning left at a green light or making a right turn on red. Pedestrians have the right of way in these situations.



## School Bus Safety



- ▣ When waiting for the bus, find a safe place to stand away from the traffic and the street- this is usually 3 giant steps (or 6 feet) away from the curb.
- ▣ Wait until the bus has stopped and the door opens before stepping onto the roadway.
- ▣ Make sure you do not block the aisles with your bookbag. They are tripping hazards and can block the way out if there is an emergency.
- ▣ Get your belongings together before you reach your stop.
- ▣ NEVER stick anything out the window – this includes your arms, legs, head, or bookbags
- ▣ Use the handrails coming on and off the bus to avoid falling.
- ▣ When getting off the bus, wait for the bus to stop *completely* before getting up from your seat.
- ▣ If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least ten feet ahead of the bus along the side of the road, until you can turn around and see the driver. Make sure that the driver can see you too.
- ▣ Do not cross the road until the driver has signaled that it is safe for you to begin walking.
- ▣ ALWAYS walk in front of the bus and not the rear of the bus.
- ▣ If you drop something near the bus, never try to pick it up without first telling the bus driver.

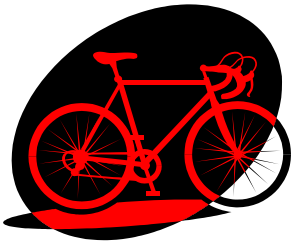


## Pedestrian Safety



Review the correct way to cross the street with all your children:

- ▣ Parents and motorists must realize that children are not small adults. Until children are at least 10 or 11 years old, they don't have the skills to handle busy roadways without supervision and guidance.
- ▣ Parents or other responsible caregivers must supervise children at all times.
- ▣ Pedestrians should always cross at intersections, stop at the curb, look LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT for traffic in all directions, cross when it is clear, and keep looking for cars as they cross.
- ▣ They should continue looking in this manner until they are safely across.
- ▣ Pay attention to all traffic signals and/or the crossing guard -- never cross the street against a light, even if you don't see any traffic coming.
- ▣ If the child is trying to cross by a parked car or other obstacle, they should move out to where drivers can see them and they can see other vehicles -- then stop, and look left-right-left again.
- ▣ Walk your bike through intersections.
- ▣ Wear reflective material, making it easier for you to be seen.
- ▣ Parents and other caregivers should set a good example and follow the same pedestrian rules.



## Bicycle Safety



Head injury is the leading cause of death in bicycle. Bicycle helmets have been shown to reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88 percent.

- ▣ Check your bike EVERY time you go to ride it! Make sure the air pressure in the tires is in the recommended range (it is normally printed on the side of the tire) and keep the chains oiled (a dry chain can lock up or break suddenly).
- ▣ ALWAYS wear a helmet. A bicycle helmet should fit comfortably and securely. It should be worn level on the head (not tilted back on the crown or pulled low over the forehead). The helmet should not be able to be moved more than an inch in any direction.
- ▣ Always ride in the same direction as other traffic.
- ▣ Learn and use hand signals when changing directions.
- ▣ Never wear headphones while riding as they could prevent you from hearing traffic.
- ▣ Stay alert at all times and watch things that could cause you to lose control, such as other vehicles, pedestrians, potholes, loose gravel, cracks, railroad tracks, or wet leaves.
- ▣ Avoid biking at night. Young children should NEVER bike at night.
- ▣ If you ride at night: Ride with reflectors (they can be on your pedals, wheels, spokes and or cranks) and wear retro-reflective clothing or material, especially on your ankles, wrists, back and helmet.

