

Bike helmets - just do it!

by Dr. Delia Chiamonte, [Baltimore Health Examiner](#)

Today my daughter was zooming down a hill on her bike, enjoying the blessings of spring. She felt carefree and capable and loved the feeling that she was flying. She loved it, that is, until her bike wheel got caught on a dip in the sidewalk and she tumbled onto the concrete.

Her soft, 9-year-old body met the hard road with an outstretched wrist and the side of her head. Thank God that head was protected by a helmet.

I have been surprised by how many children I see riding bikes without helmets. What are their parents thinking? Are the parents of those bare-headed children too lazy to insist on helmets? Afraid to make their kids mad? Unaware of the dangers?

540,000 bicyclists end up in the ER every year, and 67,000 of them have head injuries. In 2006, 770 of those cyclists die, and two-thirds of the deaths are from traumatic brain injury. It is estimated that up to 88% of those head injuries could be prevented by using a helmet. What are those parents thinking?

Studies that have looked at helmet use are shocking and depressing. One study of children in New Jersey found that only 6% of the kids who rode to school wore helmets. In North Carolina it was 17%, and nationwide some experts have estimated that only 25% of bike riders wear head protection.

For less than \$20 you can protect your child from traumatic brain injury, and maybe even death. Could there be any money that is better spent? My daughter's wrist was swollen and painful and required a trip to the hospital for an x-ray.

Bones can be mended, but brains are more sensitive. I am so grateful that her head was protected. Make your kids wear a helmet. Just do it. For more information on bike helmets and bike safety, check out www.helmet.org

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www.InsightMedicalConsultants.com