

# Follow these tips for safer bicycling this summer

**BY SUZANNE KEENE**  
**LANCASTER** — With a little assistance from the warm weather and energetic children, many bicycles are finding their way out of winter storage in barns and

garages and are appearing more and more often on the streets and highways across the state.

While bicycling is fun and offers a means of transportation, it can be a dangerous activity. According

to the National Safety Council, bicycles are involved in at least 100,000 traffic accidents each year. And, more than 78 percent of those accidents involve cyclists under 19 years of age.

Citing information from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, Extension Home Economist Michelle Rodgers said bicycle accidents most often fall into one of five categories - loss of control; mechanical or structural failure; entanglement of feet, hands or clothing in bicycle parts; food slippage from pedals or collision with a car or another bicycle.

Dorie Weik, director of school safety for the Lancaster chapter of the American Automobile Association, says that a lot more children are on the road than ever before and it is important for them to be more aware of safe bicycling rules. To help familiarize school-age children with those rules and other ways they can operate their bicycles more safely, the AAA has published a number of pamphlets and booklets that provide biking tips.

Because of the increasing number of cyclists and the accompanying need for greater education, the Lancaster AAA is sponsoring a bicycle safety rodeo for children for the first time this year.

"We are trying to teach them responsibility on the road," Weik said. Through various programs, she continued, they hope to "provide an awareness to the children. We want them to establish confidence and to become more aware of safe bicycling."

Responsibility begins with bicycle maintenance. "A lot of accidents happen because of neglect of maintenance," Weik says.

Keeping your bicycle in good working order will help the bike last longer and ride more smoothly. A AAA booklet on biking tips for kids advises cyclists to keep their bikes in good working order by checking tire pressure regularly and inspecting tires for cracks, cuts and bulges.

It is also important to keep nuts and bolts tight and to replace any missing parts immediately. The chain, wheel axles and other moving parts need oiled regularly.

Handle grips should be glued or tightly secured to the handlebars, and sharp points should be covered with heavy, waterproof tape.

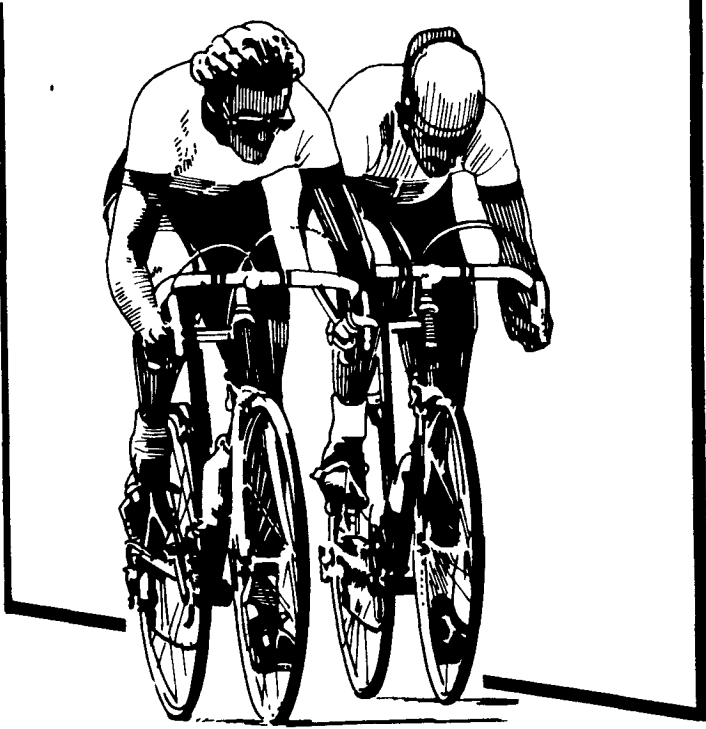
Having the proper equipment and accessories is another important part of safe cycling. Bicycles should be equipped with both lights and reflectors if they will be used at night. Federal law requires that all new bicycles have front, rear and side reflectors.

A bell or a horn to alert pedestrians or other cyclists and a "day-glo" or retro-reflective bicycle safety flag, are other devices that can make a bicycle more safe.

Although the bicycle is in great shape, it won't do it if it doesn't fit the rider properly. To check for proper fit, sit on the bicycle seat. If you can maintain balance by resting the tips of your toes on the ground, it fits. Standard handlebars should be set with the grips at seat level and high-rise handlebars should be lower than the rider's shoulder.

Weik said cyclists must obey all traffic signs, signals, and roadway markings. "Bicyclists are responsible for maintaining the same rules and regulations as motorists," she stressed.

While children were once advised to ride against traffic, they are now told to ride with the flow. "It's safer to ride with the traffic, using the left hand to give signals," she advised.



## TIPS FOR SAFE BICYCLE DRIVING

1. Signal for turns and stops.
2. Obey all traffic signs, signals and rules.
3. Yield the right of way to pedestrians.
4. Drive solo—only one on a bicycle.
5. Keep feet on the pedals at all times.
6. Keep both hands on the handlebars, except when signaling.
7. Drive with traffic in single file—close to the right-hand side of the roadway and watch for opening car doors.
8. Keep your bicycle in good repair.
9. Equip your bicycle with headlight, reflector and horn or bell.
10. Always walk bicycle across busy intersections.
11. Drive carefully, especially on wet or slippery streets.
12. Keep safe following distance—never hitch onto other moving vehicles.
13. Be sure roadway is clear before entering. Avoid busy streets and intersections.
14. Learn to drive in a safe place, keep off busy streets until you can drive well.

## BACK HOME

By Michelle S. Rodgers

Lancaster Extension  
 Home Economist



### Little Things Mean A Lot

Midway through our church service last week, I spied two familiar faces, visitors to our area, but nonetheless special friends from days gone by. After the service I rushed over to express my welcome and an invitation for lunch. (Thank goodness I had made an overdue pilgrimage to the grocery store the night before.)

The unplanned lunch was a success and friendship renewed. That Sunday afternoon was in sharp contrast to other times when we have entertained and I felt like dropping over by the time the guests arrived. This occasion was convincing to me that "hospitality" is not just how clean the house is or how excellent the meal. Hospitality is the enriching of others lives, making them feel loved, cherished, cared for and refreshed! And in doing so, we create these same feelings for our own family.

I have enjoyed being entertained in many places. This has included everything from dorm rooms, legislative dinners, ballroom buffets and even a home in an Arab refugee camp on the West Bank. The food was never the same, but what they all had in common and what I remember is the hospitality.. not the food (although Turkish coffee is difficult to forget.)

As summer months arrive and we move outdoors, casual entertaining can be an enjoyable part of our summer. Through this hospitality our families will be enriched by the building of friendships, sharing of experiences and the joy of laughter.

Some simple tips for summer hospitality might inspire you to give it a try. First, relax and be yourself. A house full of toddlers doesn't look lived in without a few toys sprawled over the room! If you find yourself hiding everything from towels to books in the dishwasher or oven, then it's time to develop a systematic family approach. Give each family member a specific responsibility like the trash, dishes, or books. Secondly, involve your family in entertaining. Including children in the preparation and the enjoyable conversation later helps to broaden everyone's horizons. Include everyone in the family in some way to make it a family affair.

Plan some simple menus that you can pull off on short notice. Keep these ingredients on hand for surprise mealtime guests. I keep a small notebook to record what I serve and what was enjoyed. This also helps to prevent serving my favorite simple menu twice to the same people (that is when I remember to look at it!)

Use your imagination to make your guests feel special and loved; a mint on their pillow at night, a few pieces of fresh fruit before they leave for a long ride elsewhere, a time when you sit and laugh and share, unburdened by schedules. These little things do mean a lot, and express a value that people are important.

As our family share together in hospitality to others, in return we too feel loved and cared for.

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Cyclists should slow down, look and listen at all intersections, give autos and pedestrians the right of way, and walk the bike across busy streets. If you must ride at night, but have no headlight, you should walk your bike.

Bicycles are not permitted on

highspeed freeways and Interstates. Bicycle paths should be used where they are available.

Bicyclists should be familiar with their town's laws regulating the use of bicycles, including bicycle registration, licensing and

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## Chores help children learn responsibility

**DELAWARE COUNTY** — Many parents feel that housework would be done quicker and easier if they did it themselves, but this attitude can make children lose out on some of the more valuable lessons chores can teach them, says Greta C. Vairo, extension home economist with the Penn State Extension Service. If we're all part of maintaining the house, then we all have a vested interest in the house. The children will be less likely to take for granted the things they have. They'll learn that home maintenance is made up of a whole lot of gears that have to mesh.

To get children to cooperate when it's time to do chores, parents should adopt the attitude that everyone, including the parents, have chores to do and that these tasks are necessary to keep the family moving forward. Children should be taught that chores have merit, that they are beneficial to the family, and that chores inside the house are just as important as maintaining the car or lawn.

Getting children under age six to help with the chores is often easier than getting an older child to help. A very young child wants to help and should be assigned tasks like emptying waste paper baskets or helping to set the table. But much of the responsibility for getting

children to do chores lies with the parents. They should realize that a large part of their time will be spent teaching children how to do assigned tasks.

Kids are beginners, you have to have patience with them. They're learning skills, they're learning about interpersonal relationships and they're learning responsibility. But they learn through repetition. They need to be shown how to do things and they may need to be shown 12 times. But then let them try it. Be watchful, but not overbearing. A common mistake many parents make is thinking there is only one way to do a chore. Let children experiment. If their way doesn't work, discuss it with them and let them fix it.

Many parents don't let children do chores because the children cannot measure up to the parent's standards. Parents should see their role as a teacher and patiently, and repeatedly, show the child what is expected. Making a list of what each job involves will also help children understand what they are to do. For example, all chores done by noon will help ensure that everything runs smoothly. If they cut corners, do them again. Penn State is an affirmative action, equal opportunity university.

