

## Sports Helmets Can Save Lives

“What is the best bike helmet? One that is worn!” The answer seems simple and obvious, but the message still eludes thousands of bicyclists every year. Recent research reveals that each year in this country, bicyclists with head injuries account for 65,000 emergency room cases, 7,700 hospital admissions, and 70% to 80% of those fatally injured.

Hoping to contribute to a reduction in head injuries, the Central Connecticut Health District offers helmets for sale. Whatever the sport, wearing a properly fitting helmet affords protection from head trauma resulting from falls and crashes. In an accident involving head injury, a helmet absorbs and distributes the force of the impact over a larger area and protects the head from objects that might otherwise penetrate the skull. Wearing a helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85% and the risk of brain injury by almost 90%.

As a non-profit agency, the Health District is able to purchase bike helmets at low cost. Helmets are lightweight and durable, and are available in toddler, youth and adult sizes and come in a variety of colors. The helmets are \$10.00 each. To buy or order a helmet, call the Health District at 721-2822 or stop by the office, located on the lower level of Wethersfield Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield. The Central Connecticut Health District also wants to remind residents:

- Helmets work only when worn; choose a style and color that you or your child likes;
- Wear a helmet every time you bicycle, skateboard or skate;
- Adults should set an example for children by wearing helmets when bicycling or skating;
- Make sure the helmet is the correct size--adjust the chin strap so it is firm but comfortable, and make sure the helmet does not shift, tilt, or come off when applying simple hand pressure;
- Wear the helmet correctly. Helmets should be worn low on the forehead, just above the eyebrows.
- Replace the helmet at least every five years, whenever it has been damaged, or if it has been in an accident (even though there appears to be no visible damage).