

Let's Go Ride A Bike...Safely

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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It was almost a rite of passage – learning to ride a bicycle. According to the latest statistics, there are nearly 67-million cyclists in the United States, with more than 12-percent of the population cycling on a regular basis.

There are a variety of reasons people take to the bike. For some, it's about a cleaner environment, for others it's for their health or as a way to avoid the higher price of gas to run their car. For some, it's simply for fun.

No matter why you ride a bike, it's important to do it safely.

SOT Dr. Kurt Bloomstrand – Emergency Medicine Physician, OSF HealthCare

(Just cause you're on the bike doesn't mean you don't have to stop at the stop signs and you don't have to obey the rules of the road. You're supposed to ride with traffic right, you're supposed to go in the same lane as traffic and follow the rules of the road. Walkers and runners are supposed to go against traffic so the cars can see you coming up. But the biggest thing I would say - bikers wear helmets or reflective clothing, wear lights at night time so we can see you, runners, same thing wear reflective clothing light-colored clothing and at night time you want to have some of illumification :29)

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, nearly 5,400 pedestrians and more than 800 bicyclists were killed in crashes with motor vehicles nationwide in 2015, nearly 18-percent of road fatalities that year. That's in addition to the thousands of injuries each year.

The reasons for the deaths and injuries are varied, from the condition of the road or sidewalk, to animals, to distracted drivers.

Dr. Kurt Bloomstrand, an emergency medicine physician, says cyclists, runners, and walkers need to be alert at all times. That includes when it comes to wanting to listen to music when you ride or walk.

SOT Dr. Kurt Bloomstrand – Emergency Medicine Physician, OSF HealthCare

(You could listen to your music but you also need to be aware of your surroundings that way you can hear if a car is coming up on your fast, you can hear if someone is talking or yelling at you to move over because you sometimes have to make a split second decision. Traffic comes up on you quickly if you're riding a bike or running or walking. You can listen to music, but maybe just one earphone in as opposed to both of them so you are still aware of your surroundings :23)

Freshen up your knowledge of pedestrian and bicycle safety rules [here](#).