

Bike!

Article written by Jamie Goffena (jgoffena2@unl.edu), Nebraska Extension Educator in the Northern Panhandle

Ahh! The breeze in your face and quality time with your family!

Children love to spend time with their parents, grandparents or adults in their lives. Autumn is a great time for bike riding with your kids.

The advantages of biking include increased energy, improved health, family bonding, and a way to “tire out” kids before bed time. For beginners, choose an area that avoids traffic, such as a park trail. Children under age 10 should not ride on streets or roads.

Avoid “hangry” bikers by eating a meal before you go or taking along a simple snack such as a cheese stick, fruit or granola bar. Bike to the local park and reward kids with a break to eat their snack or play on the play-ground equipment.

Select bikes and helmets that fit properly. Children’s legs should have a slight bend when the pedal is all the way down. Helmet straps should go around ears and allow a finger width between the strap and chin. Visit the websites listed below for more information.

Biking together as a family helps adults to role model safe habits, such as wearing a helmet and using hand signals. Be sure children know the rules of the road before they bike alone or to school each day.



Biking Rules:

- Always wear a properly fitted helmet to prevent head injuries.
- Tuck in shoe laces and pant legs.
- Ride in the farthest right hand lane with traffic.
- Follow traffic signs and signals.
- Stop at stop signs and look TWICE.
- Use hand signals.
- Ride predictably.
- Use safe routes.
- Wear reflective clothing.
- At night use a white headlight and red flashing tail light.
- Stay alert! No ear buds.
- Bring a cell phone and first aid kit for emergencies.
- Look ahead for obstacles on the path.
- Drink water to stay hydrated.
- Dress in layers.

Family Fun on the Run is a monthly newsletter to help families add physical activity to their already hectic schedules. Find more newsletters here: <http://go.unl.edu/xxqx>

Sources:

1. Bike Safety: Live to Ride Another Day, National Safety Council: <http://bit.ly/2t9R1DY>
2. Kids and Bicycle Safety, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: <http://bit.ly/2onaNtc>