**BIKE SAFETY AWARENESS**

Bicycling is becoming increasingly popular as a sport and a commute option in the United States as cities have created more bike lanes and recreational cycling is on the rise. Riders can reduce risk of injury while bicycling by wearing a properly fitted helmet, using common sense and following safety recommendations. The American Association of Neurological Surgeons recommends the following tips for cyclists:

• Children under age 1 should not be carried on a bicycle, because their necks are not strong enough to withstand a helmet on their heads.

• Bike a minimum of three feet from parked cars, in case a door swings open.

• Do not wear headphones.

• Obey local traffic regulations at all times and signal your turns.

• Never grab onto a moving vehicle to get a “free” ride.

Additionally, properly fitted bicycle helmets can protect against both head AND spinal cord injuries.

The Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute has a checklist for proper fitting:

\_\_\_ Level - The helmet should be level on the rider's head.

\_\_\_ Rim barely visible - The front rim should be barely visible to the rider's eye

\_\_\_ Y below the ear - The Y of the side straps should meet just below the ear

\_\_\_ Snug strap - The chin strap should be snug against the chin so that when the rider opens their mouth very wide the helmet pulls down a little bit.

\_\_\_ Skin moves a little - Move the helmet side to side and front to back, watching the skin around the rider's eyebrows. It should move slightly with the helmet. If it does not, the fit pads are probably too thin in front or back, or the helmet may even be too large.

\_\_\_ Stablilizer snug - If there is a rear stabilizer; adjust it until it is snug under the bulge on the rear of the head.

\_\_\_ Palm test - Have the rider put their palm on the front of the helmet and push up and back. If it moves more than an inch more fitting is required.

Bicycling is a fun and healthy way to travel and get some exercise. Just remember to use the proper precautions every time you’re out on the road.

Learn more here: <http://www.bhsi.org/checklist.htm>, www.NeurosurgeryToday.orgPreventing SCI