

STOP! DON'T USE YOUR HEAD!

Learning Objectives

After watching this demonstration the participants should be able to:

1. Understand the importance of wearing a helmet.
2. Understand the importance of wearing a helmet that fits.
3. Understand the fragile nature of the human brain.

Safety Requirements

1. Make sure you use an old helmet for your demonstration. It will be dropped several times and once helmets have come in contact with a hard surface they lose viability. This helmet should NOT be used for protection after the demonstration.
2. Create a splash zone and keep participants out of this zone. Practice your demonstration prior to the camp to determine the splash zone.
3. Use proper ladder safety if using a step ladder to reach an elevated height.

Age-Appropriateness

This activity is appropriate for participants of all ages. However, the depth of content and the discussion needs to be tailored to the level of understanding of the group. Refer to the "Teaching Tips" and "Childhood Growth and Development" located in the Teaching Kids section of the manual for teaching how to deal with peer pressure.

Suggested Instructors

Law enforcement officers, state department of public safety, university law enforcement department, extension agents or personnel, local safety organizations, emergency room personnel, college students, high school 4-H students, FFA students, EMTs, or first responders.

Equipment/Supplies Needed

1. Bicycle helmet
2. Hard surface: concrete, dry ground, or plywood
3. Two or three hard/unripened cantaloupes/watermelons
4. Ripe cantaloupes make sure you have enough for each session you are teaching.
5. Bicycle helmets for each participant if you are giving them as gifts. (Optional)

Subject Outline

I. Introduction/Capture Their Attention

- A. Introduce yourself and tell about your role teaching bike safety.
- B. Find out about your audience. Ask questions: How many of you ride a bike? How many ride on pavement, gravel, or dirt roads? How many wear helmets? Have you ever had a bike crash or injury? Do you know of anyone who had a really bad accident? What happened?
- C. You may want to start with a personal story or experience.
- D. Have a sports figure discuss the value of a helmet, for example, in football or hockey. This can make a lasting impression. Make sure that you communicate to your guest your lesson plan and the time allotted prior to the camp. This will allow the guest to prepare and help them to stay within his or her allotted time to talk.

II. Activity/Demonstration

A. Using cantaloupes:

1. Preparation: Set up an area that has a hard foundation such as a concrete surface or plywood. Put a hard/unripened cantaloupe in a old bicycle helmet.
2. Drop a ripe cantaloupe, using a little force, onto the hard surface. The cantaloupe should burst open.
3. Then drop the helmet with the hard/unripened cantaloupe in it. The cantaloupe should not break.
4. Explain to participants that the cantaloupe is like their brain on the road or ground if they were to hit their head while operating a bike while not wearing a helmet.
5. Fit each participant with a bicycle helmet.

B. Using watermelon:

1. Identify a hard surface such as concrete, plywood, or the ground.
2. Drop the watermelon at least four feet off the ground, using a little force. The watermelon should break creating large mess.
3. Explain to the participants that this is what could happen to their brain if they were to hit their head on the road while riding a bike.

III. Discussion Points

- A. Discuss cause and effect. Explain the consequences of bad decisions such as not following safety rules. Highlight that brain injuries are often permanent and discuss disabilities associated with brain trauma.
- B. Discuss increased risks of injuries when not wearing a bicycle helmet. Discuss the value of a helmet that fits properly. This discussion will include the value of this intervention and selecting the right size helmet and properly fitting it. Remind young riders to wear a helmet all the time.
- C. Talk about peer pressure. What do they like or dislike about wearing a helmet? What is it like to be the only one wearing a helmet?

