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**Bike Safety
By Rachel Leclerc**

As summer is spiraling to an end, our final days of sunshine are inevitable. We have to take advantage -- maybe go kayaking, or a picnic, or maybe even that bike ride you put on your list of things to do. Now's the time to take out your new bike you got last Christmas, you know, the one that has a bow on it and is collecting the pretty dust in the garage.

Bike rides have many positive aspects. Not only is it a fun way to get in a powerful workout to strengthen and tone your body, it's an economically useful way form of transportation. It uses renewable energy, and doesn't generate air pollution. Not to mention, it helps keep your wallet full, which in these days isn't something to look past. Go green for the environment, and keep some green in your wallet.

Although, it's fun and easy, riding a bike for transportation can skyrocket your chance of injury in an accident, because there is less protection. It's also not a great means for transportation if you have to be somewhere fast. Save the bike rides for the trips to the local grocery store, or to pick up some ice cream with your pals.

Here are some tips when riding:

- Always wear a helmet, even on those short rides. The percentage of accidents close to home is higher than you think.
- If you're going to be listening to music, keep it quiet, and always be aware of noises.
- If you ride at night- wear bright clothing, like yellow, or orange and make sure you have a light. You always want to be seen by drivers.
- Know your surroundings, and were you are.
- Don't rush. Slow down, take your time, and enjoy the scenery.
- Check your bike every time you go for a ride. It's better to fix the problem at home, rather than being stuck without help.

Follow these safety tips every time. It's easier to be safe, and take the time, so you can enjoy your ride. If you take care of your bicycle, then it will take care of you. So keep up the maintenance, put on your sun block, and get going

If you have any topics that you would like to see discussed in this column please call Maryanne at (603) 747-9189 or email maldrich@cottagehospital.org

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