Take Home Bicycle Rodeo

Dear Parents:

As part of our community outreach activities, the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP)/Laboratory Employee Safety Team (LEST) is sponsoring a *Take Home Bicycle Rodeo*. This rodeo is an easy and fun activity that will help you teach your child some important bicycle safety principles. The rodeo consists of several simple learning activities. Attached you will find the following:

1. **Parents' Instructions - directions for completing the activities.**
2. **Information/background statistics which describe the importance of the activity.**
3. **Parent/Child activities appropriate for Grades K-3 or 4-6 that reinforce bicycle safety.**
4. **Take Home Rodeo completion form.**

As your child finishes each activity, sign and date the completion form. When you have concluded all the activities, please return the form to the VPP Program Coordinator at MS-3402. The children who complete the *Take Home Bicycle Rodeo* and return their Rodeo Round-Up Form will be recognized with a special Participation Certificate.

Hopefully, as your children participate in this awareness activity, we can prevent potential injuries. If we continue to reinforce the proper bicycling safety behaviors and techniques each time your children ride their bicycles, we will be laying the groundwork for safe riding and driving their entire lives.

Thank You,

VPP/LEST

Activity 1:
Bicycle Inspection

Parents' Instructions

- Review the background information and Parent/Child Activity that follows.
- Have your child complete the age appropriate activity.
- Sign the Bicycle Rodeo Completion Form for Activity 1 when completed.
- Continue to check your child's bicycle periodically for proper operation and fit.

Bicycle Inspection Background

Many crashes are caused by failing brakes, loose handlebars, or children riding bicycles that are too large. Bicycles must fit correctly and work properly for children to be safe when riding.

Parent/Child Activity

Check the size and condition of your child's bicycle.

1. **Size:** Children should be able to stand flat footed over the bicycle with at least one inch between the bicycle's top tube (boy's bicycle) and the rider. Inexperienced riders should be able to put both feet on the ground while sitting on the seat. For more experienced riders, the legs should be just slightly bent at the bottom of the pedal stroke with the ball of the foot on the pedal. The bicycle seat should be level and not tilted forward or backward.
2. **Brakes:** Coaster brakes - Push the bike forward while pushing back on one pedal; the rear tire should skid. Make sure the brake arm is attached to the frame at the rear wheel. Hand brakes - ensure brake pads are not worn and that they hit the wheels evenly. The brake levers should work smoothly and have one inch of clearance from the handlebars when the brakes are fully applied.
3. **Wheels and Tires:** Check to see if the handlebars are tightly fastened by holding the front wheel between your legs and trying to turn the handlebars to the side. If they move, the bolt at the handlebar stem needs to be tightened.
4. **Frame and Fork:** Check the frame and fork (the metal arms on either side of the front wheel) for basic straightness. If the frame or fork are not straight, or are cracked, bring it to your local bike shop for repair.

This list is an overview of the most basic elements of bicycle maintenance. If you suspect that your bicycle is not working properly, bring it to your local bicycle repair shop for further inspection and repair.

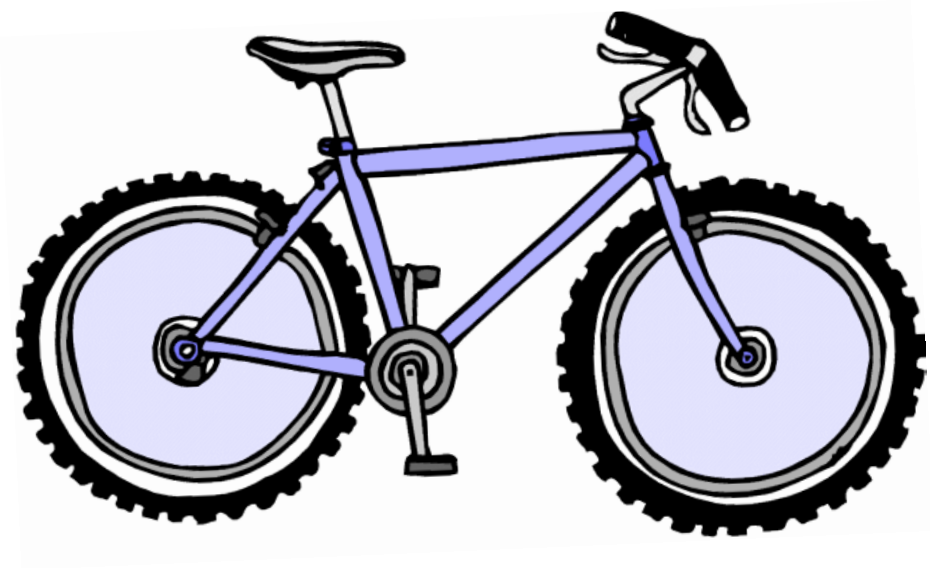
Activity 1:
Bicycle Inspection

Grades K-3

Find and draw a line from the list on the right, to the brakes, pedals, handlebars, wheels, tires, frame and helmet.

Grades 4-6

- Look at the bicycle below and label the indicated parts.
- Briefly state what you should check to be sure your bicycle is in good working order.



- Brakes
- Frame
- Handlebars
- Helmet
- Pedals
- Tires
- Wheels

Fact: Bikes must fit the rider. Oversized bikes are especially dangerous. Your child does not have the skills and coordination needed to handle a bigger bike and may lose control. Your child should be able to sit on the seat, with hands on the handlebars and place the balls of both feet on the ground. Your child's first bike should also be equipped with footbrakes, since your children's hand muscles and coordination are not mature enough to control hand brakes.

Activity 2:
Bicycle Helmets

Parents' Instructions

- Review the background information and Parent/Child Activity that follows.
- Have your child complete the age appropriate activity.
- Sign the Bicycle Rodeo Completion Form for Activity 2 when completed.
- Insist that your children wear bicycle helmets every time they ride and set a good example by doing the same yourself.

Bicycle Helmet Background

Most bicycling deaths and serious injuries are due to head injuries. Studies show that wearing a bicycle helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by 85% and the risk of brain injury by 88% in bicycle accidents.

Parent/Child Activity

Discuss:

Every time you ride your bike you should wear a bicycle helmet certified to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards. You can receive a severe head or brain injury by falling just a few feet from a standing bicycle. Brain injuries can be permanent and may not heal like an injury to an arm or a leg. Brain injuries can cause the loss of speech , sight or even paralysis or death. They can also change your personality.

Practice:

To illustrate the effectiveness of a bicycle helmet, demonstrate the following: Wrap a light bulb in plastic wrap and tape it in an old bicycle helmet. Drop the helmet from above your head onto a hard flat surface (such as a driveway or sidewalk). The light bulb will not break. Next, take the light bulb out of the helmet and drop it on the sidewalk without the protection of the helmet. The bulb will shatter (the plastic wrap will prevent the glass from scattering everywhere). Discuss with your child how the light bulb represents a head and how the helmet protects it from injury.

Make sure that your children's helmets fit correctly. The helmet should sit level on the head (a properly sized helmet will move the skin on the forehead when the helmet is tilted gently back and forth) with the chin strap fitting snugly (with room for one finger to fit between the strap and under the chin when the mouth is open). Review your bicycle helmet owner's manual if you are unsure of a correct fit.

Activity 2:
Bicycle Helmets

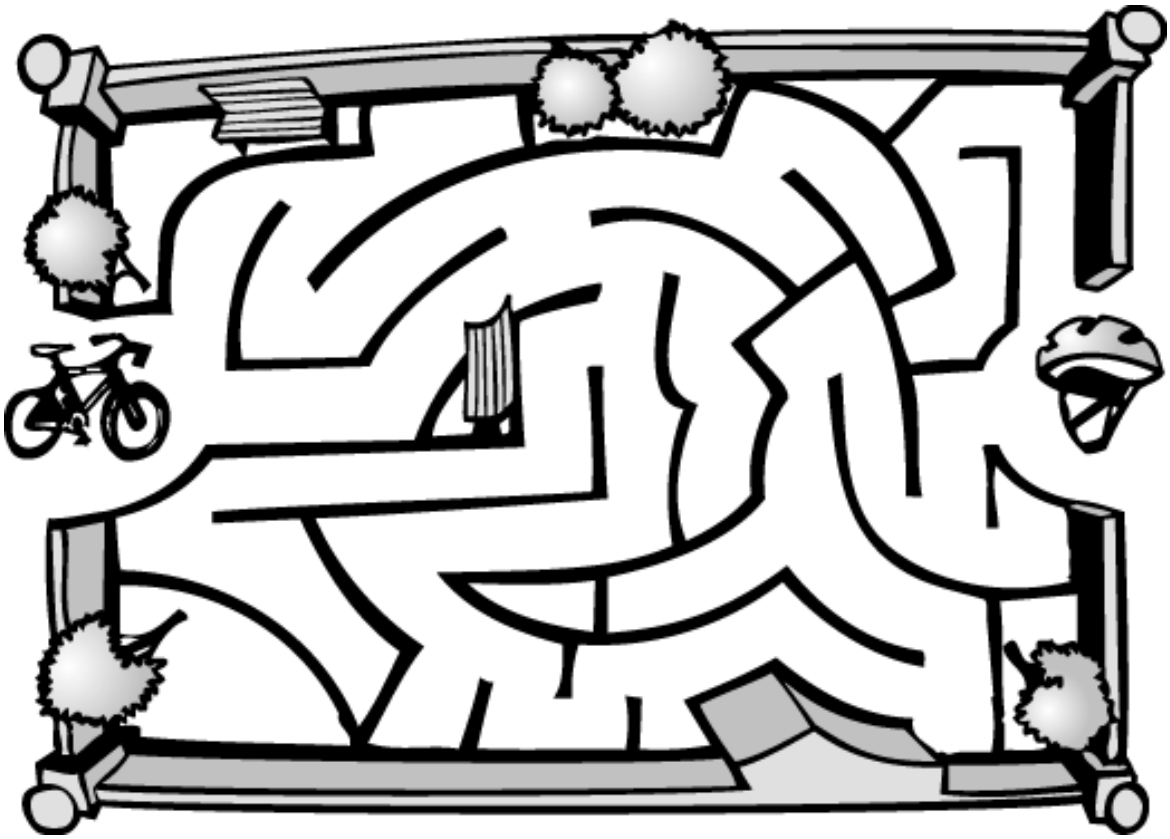
Grades K-3

Explain why you should wear a helmet every time you ride a bicycle. Properly fit your bicycle helmet with your parents' help.

Grades 4-6

- Review your Bicycle Helmet Owner's Manual.
- Demonstrate how to properly fit and wear your bicycle helmet.

DIRECTIONS: Find your way through this maze. Connect the helmet with the bicycle.



Fact: An estimated 45 to 88 percent of bicyclists' brain injuries can be prevented by wearing a helmet.

Activity 3:
Ride Out

Parents' Instructions

- Review the background information and Parent/Child Activity that follows.
- Have your child complete the age appropriate activity.
- Sign the Bicycle Rodeo Completion Form for Activity 3 when completed.
- Reinforce the lesson whenever your child rides.

Ride Out Background

Fifty percent of the automobile-bicycle collisions involving children ages 5-8 occur when children "***ride out***" into the path of traffic from a driveway or sidewalk, usually on quiet streets in residential neighborhoods.

Parent/Child Activity

Discuss:

Before walking or riding your bike into the street from a driveway or sidewalk, you should stop, look left, look right, look left AGAIN and listen to be sure the road is clear of traffic.

Practice:

Take your children to the end of a driveway or sidewalk and demonstrate the proper way to enter a street. Get your children in the habit of walking, rather than riding their bikes to the end of the driveway or sidewalk. Have them practice the look left, right and left again sequence. It is critical that you emphasize the importance of looking left a second time because traffic coming from the left offers a more immediate danger and is more likely to have an obstructed view. If traffic is approaching, wait until it has cleared and repeat the look sequence again.

Point out trees, bushes and parked cars that may block the driver's view. If there are barriers to their view, practice the left, right, left sequence again at the edge of the barrier.

Next, have your child sit in the driver's seat of a car. Show them how difficult it can be for a driver to see a bicyclist coming down a driveway or sidewalk. Make sure they understand that just because they see a car, it doesn't mean the driver sees them.

Activity 3:
Ride Out

Grades K-3

Discuss what ways each child should look before entering the street.

Grades 4-6

- Draw a picture of your driveway. Include all trees, bushes and any cars that are usually parked on the street.
- Name some barriers that would keep you from having a clear view of the street.
- Describe how you would get around barriers to enter the street.

DIRECTIONS: Circle the signs that belong to "Rules of the Road."
Be a smart and safe rider and learn the "Rules of the Road."

Fact: When a child receives his or her first tricycle or bicycle, a lifelong pattern of vehicle operation has begun. A bike is not just a toy, but a vehicle that is a speedy means of transportation, subject to the same laws as motor vehicles.

Activity 4: *Intersections*

Parents' Instructions

- Review the background information and Parent/Child Activity that follows.
- Have your child complete the age appropriate activity.
- Sign the Bicycle Rodeo Completion Form for Activity 4 when completed.
- Always set a good example by following these rules yourself, whether walking, bicycling or driving.

Intersections Background

Thirty percent of all automobile-bicycle collisions involving children under 15 occur when a child rides through a stop sign or stop light without yielding to crossing traffic.

Parent/Child Activity

Discuss:

At stop signs, stop lights and other controlled intersections, you should stop, look left, look right, look left again, look back in the direction of traffic, listen and make sure it is clear of traffic before crossing. If traffic is approaching, wait until it has cleared and initiate the look sequence again. Keep looking as you go through the intersection.

Practice:

Review the "rules of the road" regarding stop signs and stop lights. Then, take your children to a controlled intersection and practice crossing safely. Explain that when riding in a group, each bicyclist must stop and make sure it is clear of traffic before crossing. Teach your young children to walk their bikes through busy intersections. Remind them that it is the law to obey traffic signals even when no one appears to be coming. Most importantly, set a good example by following the "rules of the road" yourself when you are driving and riding a bike.

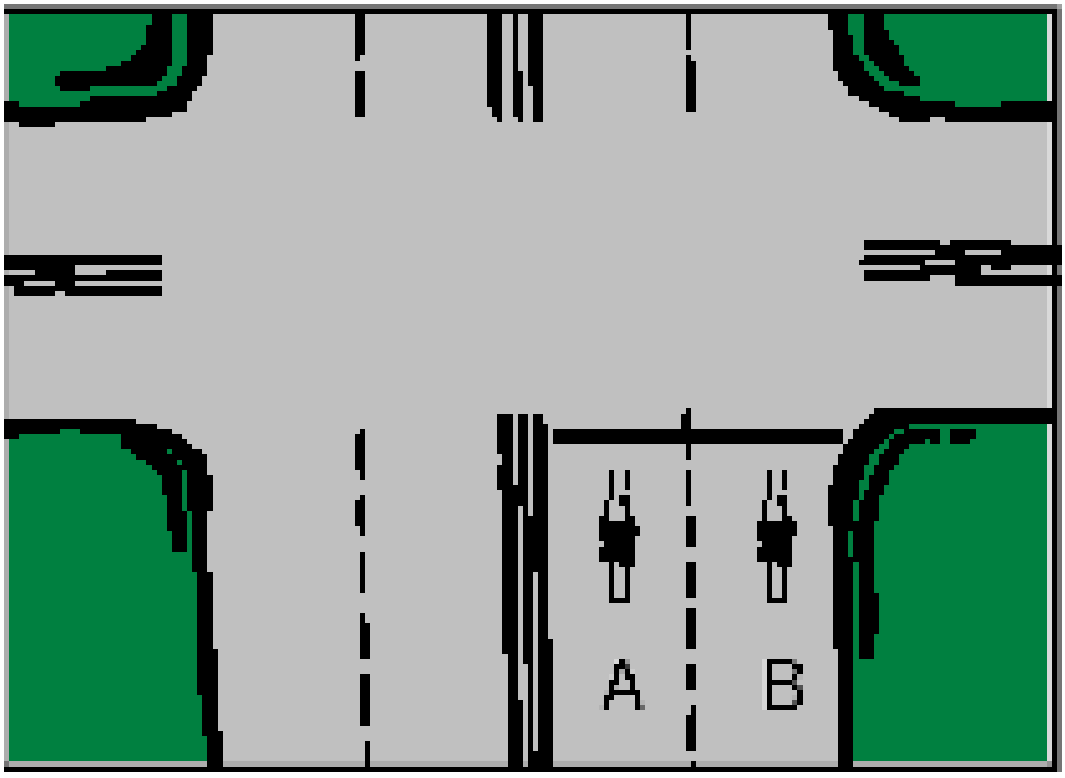
Activity 4:
Intersections

Grades K-3

Where should you look when stopping at intersections and what do you do with your bike?

Grades 4-6

- Describe why you should always stop your bicycle at stop signs and intersections.
- Pretend Bicyclist A is turning left—draw an arrow to show the proper way the bicyclist would turn.
- Pretend Bicyclist B is turning right—draw an arrow to show the proper way the bicyclist would turn.
- Pretend Bicyclist B is going straight—draw an arrow to show the proper way the bicyclist would go.



Two Lanes

Four Lanes

Fact: Hand signals are an important communication link between bicyclists and motorists. Many accidents involving older children occur when they fail to signal motorists as to their intended actions.

Activity 5:
Swerving

Parents' Instructions

- Review the background information and Parent/Child Activity that follows.
- Have your child complete the age appropriate activity.
- Sign the Bicycle Rodeo Completion Form for Activity 5 when completed.
- Discuss with your child the fact that although riding in a straight line may not always be easy, in traffic it is critically important.

Swerving Background

Thirty percent of all automobile-bicycle collisions involving children under 15 occur when a child turns unpredictably into the path of faster moving traffic.

Parent/Child Activity

Discuss:

Before swerving to make a turn, change lanes or avoid an obstacle, look back over your shoulder to be sure the road is clear of traffic, signal and look again.

Practice:

Take your children to a safe parking lot or playground. Stand behind them while they ride along a straight painted line. Hold up numbered or colored cards and have them practice looking back over their shoulder and telling you the number or color of the card -- without riding off the painted line. Next, have your children practice the lane change process: Look back over the shoulder, signal, look again, and then change lanes. ***Children should not be allowed to ride their bikes on the street until they have mastered this skill.***

Activity 5:
Swerving

Grades K-3

Color the picture below. Which side of the road should you stay close to?

Grades 4-6

You should always look over your shoulder to check for traffic before changing lanes. List five instances which would require you to change lanes (remember to always check for traffic from behind **BEFORE** changing lanes).

Fact: Many fatalities occur when the first rider violates riding rules and the second one blindly follows. Running stop signs or red lights, riding out of driveways or zipping across lanes all seem natural to the second child because they are more focused on the rider in front of them than on the rules of the road.

Bicycle Rodeo:
Completion Form

I have completed the activities from *The Take Home Bicycle Rodeo*.

I will remember to always practice the safe riding lessons I have learned

	Child's Signature	Parent's Signature	Date Completed
Activity 1			
Bicycle Inspection	_____	_____	_____
Activity 2			
Helmets	_____	_____	_____
Activity 3			
Ride Out	_____	_____	_____
Activity 4			
Intersections	_____	_____	_____
Activity 5			
Swerving	_____	_____	_____

Child's Name: _____