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Bicycle safety tips

With warmer weather returning you can expect to see area youth getting their bikes out. The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is offering the following tips to help prevent serious crashes involving bicycle riders:

? Stay alert: Cyclists must follow the rules of the road and always watch out for vehicles; assume that drivers don't see you. Motorists need to recognize that bikes are smaller, lighter and more maneuverable. Slow down and give yourself time to react to a cyclist.

? Buckle the helmet: Riders under 18 years are required to wear a properly fit, CSA approved bike helmet. Safe Kids Canada estimates a bike helmet reduces the risk of serious head injury by 85 per cent.

? Ride during daylight: Biking at night is not recommended. The safest way to get your bike home after dark is to walk it. If you have to bike at night, install a light, reflectors on the bike and wear reflective clothing.

? Ride with traffic: Cyclists should travel as far to the right as possible in the same direction as traffic. Always ride single file, use appropriate hand signals to indicate turns and don't carry passengers if you don't have extra seats.

? Regular maintenance: Monitor brakes, tire pressure, chain, gear selector, derailer, seat height and handle bar height. Especially before the first ride after winter. A bike that's too big, too small or in bad repair isn't safe.

? Sound device: All bikes must have a sound signaling device like a horn or a bell for safety. Ride with both hands on the handlebars unless signaling a turn or a problem.

Riding a bike is a fun activity that gives you a chance to exercise and travel without polluting the environment. When riding on a hot day consider sunglasses, sunscreen and carry some water. When you feel thirsty, you've already lost too much water. Stay alert, stay safe and enjoy your bike ride.