



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

September 6, 2006

Experts encourage children and parents to bike to school safely

Vancouver, B.C. – BC Children's Hospital, the Vancouver Police Department, the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition and the Vancouver School Board are appealing to parents and children to ride bikes to school in safety, and strap properly fitting helmets on every time they ride. At an announcement today held at General Wolfe Elementary, students gathered to hear the experts explain proper use of helmets and bike safety tips, just in time for back-to-school.

Data from the Children's Hospital Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP) shows that these incidents typically involve boys aged five to 14, and that the number of incidents involving cyclists not wearing helmets has been increasing every year since CHIRPP's inception in 1997.

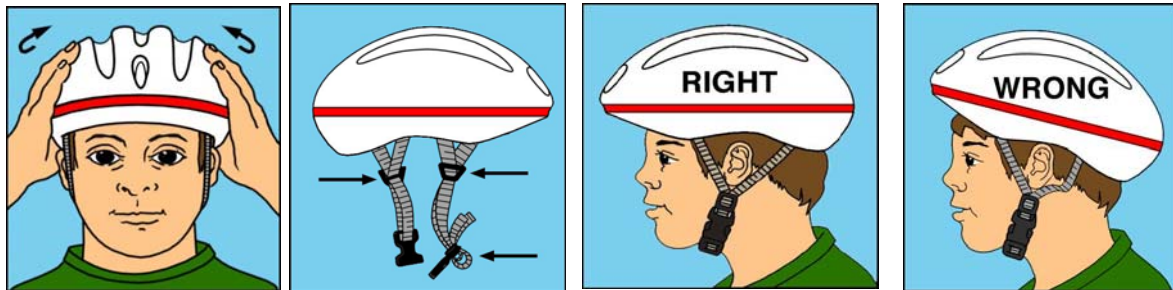
"We continue to see head injuries due to children not wearing bike helmets," said Dr. Paul Steinbok, Head of the Division of Neurosurgery at BC Children's. "The rates of these injuries have actually been increasing gradually since initially dropping off when legislation was passed. The sad part is that these injuries are almost always preventable."

"Bicycle helmets are not an optional accessory to cycling but an essential piece of safety equipment which reduces your chances of serious injury or death in the event of an accident," said Vancouver Police Department Chief Constable Jamie Graham.

Jack Becker, a Director of the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition, promotes cycling as an effective way for improving the mobility of students while making a major contribution

to their health in an environmentally responsible manner. “Cycling is an essential life skill, which provides opportunities for students to participate in physical activities for life. The use of helmets as a safety device is a small act towards ensuring that the cycling experience will be pleasurable.”

TIPS TO ENSURE THE PURCHASE OF THE CORRECT BICYCLE HELMET (the 4 S's)



- Size:** try several different helmets before you buy one to ensure a good fit
- Strap:** the helmet should not move or rotate on your head
- Straight:** ensure that helmet is worn low on the forehead, just above eyebrows
- Sticker:** look for certification (i.e. CSA, Snell, ASTM, CPSC)

BC Children’s Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provides expert care for the province’s most seriously ill or injured children, including newborns and adolescents. For more information please visit www.bcchildrens.ca.

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition is a 300 member volunteer organization within the Lower Mainland advocating for *Cycling for Transportation* and for better cycling conditions with municipalities and encouraging the public to use bicycles as transportation for their next trip in a safe manner. For more information refer to the Coalition’s web site at www.vacc.bc.ca.

-30-

NOTE TO EDITORS – a copy of the television PSA produced by Columbia Academy was distributed to media that attended the event. For a copy, please call Public Affairs & Communications at (604) 875-2425.

Media contact:

BC Children’s Hospital
Public Affairs & Communications
604-875-2301
pafc@cw.bc.ca