

Bicycle head injury facts for Alberta

- Three of the six deaths in Alberta resulting from bicycling during the last two years were due to head injuries.¹
- From April 1, 1997 to March 31, 1998, there were 6951 emergency room visits in Alberta for injuries sustained in bicycle-related incidents.²
- Last year 461 emergency room visits were for head injuries related to a bicycle injury. Assuming the bicycle-riding season in Alberta is six months long, that means more than 75 emergency visits per month are due to bicycle-related head injuries.²
- Research has shown that helmet use is associated with a reduction in head injuries by up to 85% and a decrease in brain injury by 88%.³

During 1997 in Alberta

- More than 70 Albertans were hospitalized for serious head injuries as a result of bicycle-related incidents.⁴
- Nearly 4% of the 1,832 inpatient hospitalizations of Albertans with a most responsible diagnosis of a serious head injury were attributed to a bicycle-related injury.⁴
- Bicycle injuries were the 5th leading cause of head injuries behind falls, motor vehicle collisions, assault and being accidentally struck by objects or people.⁴
- Approximately one-quarter of all bicycle-related injuries requiring inpatient hospitalization resulted from motor vehicle collisions.⁴
- Two-thirds of all bicycle-related injuries requiring an inpatient hospital stay occurred to people under age 20. Nearly 50% were to children between the ages of 15 and 14.⁴

Note: For the purpose of this fact sheet, “head injuries” is described as skull fractures and intracranial injuries, which includes concussions.

1. Vital Statistics, VISITS Database, Alberta Municipal Affairs, August 1998,
2. 1997/98 ACCS Visits, Alberta Health
3. Prevention of Bicycle-Related Injuries – Helmets, Education and Legislation – Rivara et al, Annual Review of Public Health, 1998 19:293-318
4. 1997 Inpatient Separations; Alberta Health

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