

Helmets for Healthy Heads: Advancing Pediatric Injury Prevention through Knowledge Enhancement in the Pediatric ED

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BACKGROUND

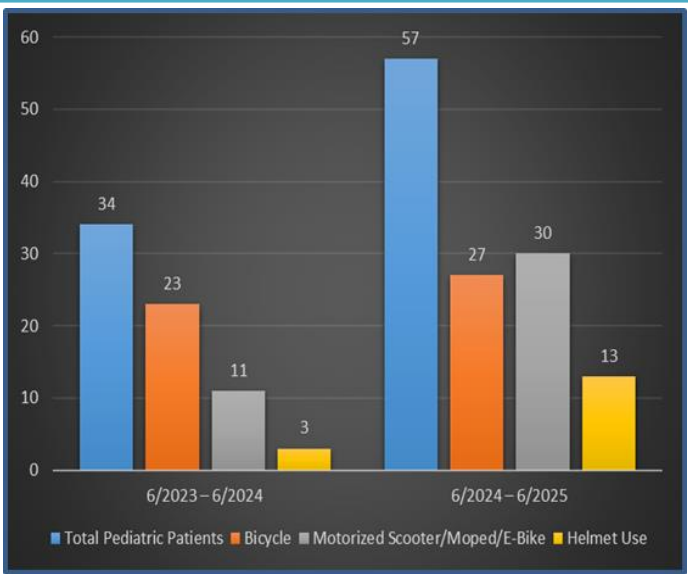
Head injuries are a leading cause of emergency department visits among children engaging in recreational activities, like pedal bicycling, e-bikes, riding scooters, or skateboarding. Evidence indicates many of these injuries are preventable with proper helmet use. However, access to helmets and education on the importance remains limited for many families. Research shows that proper helmet use can reduce the risk of severe head injury by up to 85%. However, gaps in knowledge about helmet safety and inconsistent helmet use persist, particularly in underserved communities. In response, the Pediatric Emergency Department at UMC collaborated with the Healthy Living Institute and established Helmets for Healthy Heads, beginning its official launch in June 2025.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to enhance pediatric knowledge of bicycle helmet safety, increase their intention to wear a helmet, and improve actual helmets use. The initiative focuses on children seen in the Pediatric Emergency Department for recreational related injuries. The project delivers impact through hospital created education, hands on helmet fitting demonstration, and free helmet distribution.

METHODS

Pediatric Emergency staff identifies patients that present with injuries or complaints linked to bike, scooter, or similar recreational activities. Eligible families will receive a free, age-appropriate helmet and hospital-created safety education. Methods of education delivery include UMC's Health Clips, UMC Healthy Heads program flyer, and/or live verbal demonstration from staff. Helmet distribution will be tracked in the electronic health record in EPIC.





HELMETS FOR HEALTHY HEADS

Please scan the QR code to watch a short video on the importance of a properly fitted helmet. Eligible families will receive a complimentary helmet and custom fitting from our experts.



RESULTS

A query of the institution's trauma registry from June 2024 to June 2025 revealed that only 23% of pediatric patients were wearing a helmet at the time of the injury for the following mechanisms: bicycle and motorized scooter/moped/e-bike. Notably, 77% were not wearing a helmet, emphasizing the need for a helmet program and teaching opportunity.

Although this is an ongoing project, the upward trajectory of traumatic injuries during recreational activities has warranted the distribution of 6 helmets in UMC Pediatric ED since June, 2025. Roller skates, scooters and skateboards attribute to the mechanism of injury. Patients serviced with this intervention range from 6 – 17 years of age.

CONCLUSIONS

The Helmets for Healthy Heads program represents a practical, cost-effective strategy to advance pediatric injury prevention education efforts within the Pediatric Emergency Department setting. By combining education with free helmet distribution, the project empowers families to make safer choices and will help reduce preventable injuries related to misuse or non-use of helmets. Expansion to other departments and continued staff engagement are recommended to sustain and grow the program's impact.

REFERENCES

See poster author for reference list.

