



# Protect Your Head

## CHALLENGE

Make it a habit to wear a helmet

## Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Protect Your Head."
2. Create a plan to protect your head. Wear a helmet for activities with a risk for head injuries.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When Kathleen Putman left for work one morning, she didn't have the same rush-hour, stuck-in-traffic commute as her co-workers.<sup>1</sup>

She still had to fight traffic, follow stop lights, and navigate intersections. And she still had to watch out for other drivers. But the Ohio resident wasn't behind the wheel. She was on a bike, dressed in riding gear, wearing a helmet, with work clothes in a backpack.

Putman had made the bike-to-work commute many times before. But this time, her ride didn't go as planned.

Out of nowhere, an inattentive driver hit her from behind at 45 miles per hour. The impact threw Putman into the driver's windshield head first. She suffered spinal fractures and other injuries. But she lived.

"I did have a head injury from that," says Putman. "...but I am certain I would not have survived without a helmet on."

Do you wear a helmet when you should? It's not just to protect your head while cycling. Lots of activities put your head at risk for injury like baseball, rock climbing, skateboarding, motorcycle riding, or construction work.

Want to stay safe and live longer? Take the month-long health challenge to *Protect Your Head*.

## Protecting your head: How much do you know? Take this quiz.



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1.   To fit properly, a bike helmet is flat on your head, buckled loosely, and does not impact your view.
2.   About 65,000 head injuries a year occur on construction job sites, and more than 1,000 are fatal.
3.   Most helmets should be replaced every 3 to 5 years, because materials begin to break down.
4.   If you survive a serious head injury, your risk of early death goes up 30 to 50 percent.
5.   You should replace a helmet after it's taken a serious hit, such as being dropped or in an accident.

How did you do? If you answered any of these statements incorrectly, you could benefit from learning more about how to protect your head. Your helmet should fit snugly. And if it has a chin strap, it should be buckled and fit snugly, too. Wear a helmet. It's the best way to protect your head. And it could save your life.<sup>3</sup>

Answers: 1. False. 2. True. 3. True. 4. True. 5. True.

## Keep Your Head in the Game

Ever wonder what the big deal is about wearing helmets? If you've ever participated in an activity where you should have worn a helmet but didn't, you're not alone.

Sure, a helmet might make your head sweaty. Maybe you've never had a head injury, and think it will stay that way. Or maybe you think wearing a helmet makes you look silly or isn't stylish.

*News flash:* None of these are good reasons or excuses to go without a helmet. Keep your head in the game. Read on for a few reasons that wearing a helmet matters.