



**BICYCLE**  
NETWORK®

## ***Bicycle Network Mandatory Helmet Review***

***Opinion of Kay Teschke, Professor, School of Population & Public Health,  
the University of British Columbia, Canada***

1. *Do you believe it should be mandatory to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle?  
(If you believe it should be mandatory at some times but not others please  
describe when.)*

No

2. *What's your reasons for your answer to question one?*

**The benefits of cycling are high and the risks are low.**

- Studies consistently show that physical activity, including *bicycling*, *lowers risks of common chronic diseases*: heart disease, stroke, dementia, diabetes, depression, certain cancers (breast, colon).
- Our Canadian research indicates *absolute risks* of cycling fatality and serious head injury *are low*:
  - the risk of *death* is about 1 per 7 million trips by bike,
  - the risk of *hospitalization* for head injury is 1 per 640,000 trips by bike.
- Studies consistently show that the *individual health benefits of cycling greatly outweigh injury risks*. *Cycling also provides population-level benefits* as a mode of transport compared to driving: negligible noise, air pollution, greenhouse gases, congestion, or risk of trauma to other road users.
- Cycling, with or without a helmet, is beneficial to people who do it and to society as a whole. It is *important to population health to make it easy for more people to cycle more often*.

**There are measures other than helmets that reduce injury risk as much or more.**

- Helmets are a *post-crash head injury mitigation* measure. Our Canadian research indicates that 75% of cycling hospitalizations are for injuries to body regions other than the head, and another 12% are for injuries to both the head and other body regions.
- There are many measures that *prevent crashes* and thus injuries to *all body regions*, for example:
  - cycling on separated bike lanes, quiet street bikeways, and off-street bike paths,
  - cycling slower and where motor vehicle speeds are 30 km/h or lower,
  - cycling with running lights (lights on day and night),
  - cycling sober.

**There are health reasons for people to choose headwear other than helmets.**

- In sunny weather, wide-brimmed hats can reduce exposure of the eyes, head, and neck to solar radiation, an exposure associated with skin (melanoma and non-melanoma), lip, and eye cancers.
- In cold weather, warm head and neckwear can prevent frostbite.

3. *Do you provide consent for your opinion to be made public?*

Yes

Signed:  Date: October 12, 2017

Please send completed form to [craigr@bicyclenetwork.com.au](mailto:craigr@bicyclenetwork.com.au) before 5pm, Friday 13 October, 2017.

**Making bike riding easy for everyone**

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