

- Change hand positions frequently.
- Remember to keep the wrist straight.
- Try padded gloves or handlebar tape to reduce the vibration.

Children aged 10 years or less are at risk of trapping fingers in the moving parts of a bicycle, such as the chain. Children should be warned about these hazards. It may be wise to consider buying a bicycle that has a shield over the chain.

### **Shoulder pain**

Injury to the shoulder usually occurs during longer rides. It is mainly caused by placing too much weight on the hands, and riding with straight elbows.

#### **Prevention tip:**

- Keep the elbows slightly flexed to stop the 'road shock' transferring to the arms and upper body. This will reduce the risk of shoulder injury.

### **Knee injury**

Knee injury is generally due to overuse, and occurs when a cyclist is doing too much too fast.

#### **Prevention tips:**

- Slowly build up your strength through training to minimise strain on the knees, and reduce the amount of hard training or hill work.
- Adjust the height of your seat - this will ease the pressure on the knee. If the seat is too high or too low, stress is placed on the knees. Seek the advice of a professional bike fitter to determine the appropriate height for your seat.

### **Maintain the bicycle**

It is vital to maintain the bicycle in good working order. Children, particularly those of primary school age, are most at risk of injury from equipment failure. Common equipment failures include:

- **Slipped chain** - the chain comes off while the bike is in motion.
- **Wheel loss** - the wheel (commonly the front) comes off while the bike is in motion.
- **Handlebar malfunction** - for example, the handlebars break, fall off or come loose. This can result in the rider losing control of the bike.
- **Broken pedals** - the pedal comes loose or breaks while the bike is in motion.

### **Brake smoothly**

Hard braking is a common cause of cycling injuries. This can cause the brakes to lock and the rider to fall over the handlebars. Children need careful instruction on how to brake safely.

## **Where to get help**

- Smartplay Victoria Tel. (03) 9674 8777
- Bicycle Network Victoria Tel. (03) 8636 8888
- VicRoads Tel. 131171

## **Things to remember**

- Common causes of cycling-related injuries include incorrect riding postures, demanding too much of your body, and faulty equipment.
- Only seven per cent of cycling injuries involve collisions with other vehicles - you are much more likely to hurt yourself by falling off your bike or hitting a stationary object.
- Children, particularly those of primary school age, are most at risk of injury.

**This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:**

Smartplay