



AMH Family Health Fest May 18 Makes it Fun to Be Safe

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Advance Appointments Required for Children to Receive Free Bike Helmets

ALTON, IL -- Safety and fun are the focus of Alton Memorial Hospital's seventh annual Family Health Fest, to be held Saturday, May 18, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the back parking lot (between the Medical Office Buildings).

The event continues to grow each year. Despite unseasonably warm weather in early May last year, close to 600 people attended the event and close to 300 free bike helmets were given out.

The helmets are available to pre-registered children ages 4 through those completing eight grade this year, with helmets provided by the Helmets First organization led by Dr. Joseph Cangas, a pediatrician from Columbia, Ill. **Helmet supplies are limited, so appointments must be made in advance by calling 1-800-392-0936.** Volunteers will also be on hand to make sure the helmets are correctly fitted.

Carefree bike riding is a rite of passage in childhood — if it's done safely. Among Illinois children age 5 to 14 who were admitted to emergency rooms for bike injuries last year, 40 percent had injuries to their head or neck.

That's why wearing helmets while riding a bicycle is so important, says Dr. Cangas, who started the non-profit Helmets First organization along with a website to promote bike safety (www.helmetsfirst.com).

"As a pediatrician, I've seen everything from scalp lacerations requiring staples to stays in the intensive care unit that have led to total devastation due to kids in bike accidents not wearing a helmet," says Dr. Cangas, also known as the "Helmet Doctor."

He says that children should never get on a bike, scooter, skateboard or skates without a helmet.

“As soon as kids are riding anything, they should put on a helmet, even if they’re riding with parents or in pull carts,” Dr. Cangas says. “Even a spill on a tricycle can lead to a devastating injury. But 85 percent of all bicycle-related head injuries could be prevented by a helmet. I advise parents to put the bike on a hook and only take it down once the helmet is on.”

Other features of the Family Safety Fest are scheduled to include:

- A free hot dog lunch served by the Bethalto Kiwanis beginning at 11 a.m.
- Piasa Martial Arts demonstration at 11:30 a.m.
- The Alton Fire Department Smokehouse.
- ID kits based on dental impressions from the Lewis and Clark Community College School of Dental Hygiene.
- The Illinois State Police rollover vehicle, which graphically shows what can happen to passengers when a car turns over on the highway.
- Healthy teeth information and giveaways from the SIUE School of Dental Medicine.
- A drawing for Cardinals tickets, courtesy of First Mid-America Credit Union.
- Drawings for smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers from Home Depot.
- A kids copter from St. Louis Children’s Hospital landing on the AMH helipad (weather permitting).

Please register in advance for the Family Safety Fest (everyone who is attending) and to make an appointment for a free bike helmet (ages 4 through eighth grade) by calling

800-392-0936. In case of rain, the event would be moved inside to the hospital's Beeby Wing lobby and the cafeteria. Some attractions such as the rollover vehicle, the smokehouse and helicopter would have to be canceled, but most other events including the helmet giveaway can be done indoors.

AMH Family Health Fest

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, May 18

Call 1-800-392-0936 to register

Also call the 800 number to make appointments

for the free bike helmet and fitting for children ages 4 through eighth grade



Jessica Mossman of the Alton Memorial Hospital Family Birth Center talks with visitors to last year's Family Health Fest at AMH. This year's event will be Saturday, May 18.