

I've really enjoyed bike riding this summer. Some days all it amounts to is riding to work, then home for lunch and back and maybe running some errands. But I figure that's better than nothing, especially when those errands take me to the other end of town.

My husband pointed out a coupon that would be good through the weekend and asked that I go buy a bike helmet for myself. I did. It wasn't extremely comfortable when I tried it on.

Upon looking in a mirror, I noticed kind of an odd strap on my forehead only to realize that I had it on backwards. Gee, there was even an arrow very distinctly instructing me which end was the front.

The fit was much better when it was put on right. Imagine that.

So I got home and put it in a handy place close to the front door. You mean just buying it isn't good enough? You mean that's like buying exercise equipment or cleaning supplies but never using them? Really?

I rode to Rotary lunch one day where I sat by Father Lorenz, another frequent bike rider who is more diligent to the helmet wearing habit. He mentioned two times when the helmet really made a difference for him, once when his handlebars gave way and another when he had an unexpected change in road conditions. He went down and was fortunate both times to have the cushion of his helmet.

He also wore his helmet in a skiing experience when he crashed. His memory was temporarily affected from the impact but much credit was given to his faithful helmet for very possibly warding off more serious damage.

A bike accident kept a friend from directing her students in their music concerts that spring. Again, although she was out of commission for awhile it was felt that her helmet saved her.

We had recently attended the Bible school program of our grandchildren. I had seen videos of our grandson riding his bike but for some reason, he wanted to show me the real deal.

It was starting to get dark but they live on a one-way street that was quiet so I agreed to watch him. But he disappeared inside. Hmmm? He returned with his bike helmet on and said he can't ride without it. I was impressed!!

Well I bought a helmet. Doesn't that count?

I was headed home for lunch last week and had a friendly greeting from George, a kind fellow Nebraskan who makes his way to Imperial.

"Where's your helmet?" he questioned with sincerity.

He then proceeded to tell me about two women whose lives changed instantly due to recent bike accidents. In fact, one's life was snatched away when she was killed after hitting a pothole and flying over the bike. The other marred her face very badly.

Guess what I did when I got home? I pulled out my helmet that I had never actually worn when sitting on my bike. I wore it on my return trip and waved to George who gave me a thumbs-up.

Helmets might not have been the issue with the two women George told me about. Sometimes helmets don't avoid all injury, just like when wearing seat belts in vehicles.

But I just read an article stating that the chance of suffering a serious head injury in a bicycle accident is reduced by as much as 85 percent by wearing a helmet. Those are pretty high odds.

You don't have to be riding in heavy traffic or at high speeds to have an unexpected fall. And it doesn't have to be a serious fall to cause FOREVER damage.

I'm working on the new helmet habit although I'll have to admit I'm not 100 percent yet. Guess I should adopt my grandson's concept that I just can't ride without it. And I encourage others to do the same!