

Motorcyclists need eye gear

The coming of balmy spring weather signals the beginning of the heaviest motorcycle riding season in Michigan, and statistics reveal that riding a motorcycle is six times as dangerous as riding in a car.

Michigan motorcyclists can increase their chances of a safe riding season by taking steps to make sure they can both see and be seen, according to Dr. Jack A. Bergstrom, president of the Michigan Optometric Association.

Blinding glare can be a greater problem to the safety of the motorcyclist than to the automobile driver, he said.

"Not only does direct glare from the sun affect the vision and safety of the motorcyclist but glare from the pavement creates additional problems," Dr. Bergstrom said.

Glare from the pavement often hides a potentially dangerous obstruction such as a hole in the road and frequently causes errors in judging speed and distance, according to recent studies.

A simple way to help solve the problem of glare is to wear a helmet with a bill as well as sunglasses, tinted goggles or face shields to reduce other types of glare, he suggested.

"Eyes have different sensitivities to glare, therefore in choosing glare reducing devices, it is important to be certain the lenses have the proper density for your individual eyes," he continued.

Some motorcyclists work in offices and factories during the week and are in bright sunlight only while riding on weekends, while other riders work outdoors in bright light most of the time.

Tinted lenses should noticeably reduce glare without restricting the ability to see clearly, he added. Motorcyclists choosing to use tinted goggles and face shields to reduce glare, should remember to take them off at dusk. Sunglasses and tinted shields should never be worn at night.

"Since a motorcycle and its driver are only one-third the width of the

average automobile, taking steps to ensure that other motorists see you is another important part of having a safe riding season," Dr. Bergstrom said.

"An excellent way to be seen is by operating head and tail lights at all times, day or night. Studies have shown that a vehicle using even a low candle power light during the daylight hours greatly increases its visibility," he said.

At night, helmets carrying symbols made up of retroreflective sheeting are detected at a distance more than three times farther away than plain white helmets are detected, Dr. Bergstrom said. Open triangles composed of about five square inches of retro-reflective material should be on both sides as well as the front and back of the helmet, he suggested.

Open designs such as triangles, circles and squares are detected at greater distances than similar but solid shapes containing the same area of retro-reflective material, he continues. Helmets painted with reflective spray paint are detected at greater distances than plain white helmets, but retro-reflective designs offer the greatest visibility. Decorating fenders, seats and wheels with retro-reflective material also increases a motorcycle's visibility at night.

The doctor of optometry also stressed the importance of wearing eye protection while riding. Low hanging branches in a rider's path and rocks thrown in the air by other vehicles can injure unprotected eyes, he says, adding that the eye protection should be strong, impact resistant and fit well.

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Fear can create health problems

People put off doing dozens of things because they are afraid. This tendency is particularly troublesome in health matters.

Problems which are not serious when promptly attended to may grow more dangerous with time. Dentists and physicians rely on reassurance and anesthetics to overcome fear of pain, yet they realize that painkillers do not control anxiety or memory.

Minor treatments should be done under a local anesthetic because less risk is involved. But many frightened people, even those who know better, demand general anesthesia just because they do not want to be aware of what happens.

The National Institute of Dental Research, a component of the National Institutes of Health, is supporting and conducting research to make dental operations as safe and pleasant as possible.

Experiments with healthy volunteers by a team of investigators in Seattle, Wash. have shown that a semi-reclining position prevents fainting and also minimizes the changes in breathing, blood flow and heart beat experienced by many patients who sit upright while under the influence of various anesthetic drugs.

THE SCIENTISTS also report that the short-acting barbiturate, methohexital, when given in the veins, has proved to be an especially valuable dental drug, because patients are quickly anesthetized with very little strain on the heart, and quickly recover.

Another improvement comes from

combining a tranquilizer with a common local anesthetic. The tranquilizer, diazepam, relaxes muscles, relieves anxiety, and gives most memories of the operation, yet patients remain conscious and cooperative.

Institute investigators at Bethesda find that these patients also have fewer irregularities in heart beat with this type of anesthesia than under general anesthesia.

Because diazepam is given in the veins, it is readily absorbed, and acts very quickly. There are no unpleasant side effects, unless one objects to a sensation of floating. Patients recover quickly and are able to return to normal activities in a short time.

FOR LONGER OPERATIONS, dentists sometimes follow an intravenous dose of diazepam with one of methohexital. Then less of each drug is required because their cooperative action is more effective than when either is given separately.

The combination is useful both for the average patient and for those with a tendency to muscle spasms.

Perhaps the best feature of both of these drugs, next to safety and efficiency, is that they induce a pleasant relaxation combined with erasure of memories. After experiencing them, patients no longer dread going to the dentist, and are willing to have regular examinations and to keep appointments for necessary treatments.

However, to use and monitor the newer intravenous techniques, dentists require special training and equipment which are not available everywhere.

Club donates to hospital

The Zonta Club of Detroit, an organization of business and professional women, has donated an artificial kidney machine to Hutzel Hospital, the center for kidney disease treatment and transplantation in the Detroit Medical Center.

Among those who presented a plaque for the machine to Dr. Frank

Academy alums planning reunions

Members of the alumnae of St. Mary's Academy, Monroe, will return to the academy for class reunions and the 76th general meeting April 27.

In addition to the golden jubiliaries of 1924 and the silver jubiliaries of 1949, 13 graduating



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