

NEWS



Edward A. Diana
Orange County Executive

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For more information, contact Kristin Jensen at
kjensen@orangecountygov.com or 291-2705

Orange County Recognizes Public Health Week *Encourages Residents to Live Safe and Injury-Free*

Goshen – Trips, slips, falls, car accidents, bicycle mishaps ... chances are you've experienced one or more of these injury-causing incidents or know someone who has. In fact, each year nearly 30 million people are injured seriously enough to land in the emergency room and nearly 150,000 die from their injuries. Recognizing the magnitude of the numbers and knowing that even small changes in our daily lives can make a difference in reducing them, the American Public Health Association has dedicated April's National Public Health Week to safety awareness and injury reduction.

Orange County Executive Edward A. Diana and Dr. Jean M. Hudson, Commissioner of Health, encourage all County residents to take steps to live healthier, safer, and injury-free lives. "Join me and the Department of Health as we work to make Orange County a healthier, safer place to live, work, and raise a family," said Mr. Diana. "Please take just a few minutes out of your day to make one positive change that could prevent an injury. Seemingly small actions can have a big impact when they're spread throughout an entire family, community, and nation," continued Mr. Diana. "Increasing awareness on how to live safer and injury-free lives is a critical step as we work to create a healthier County."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 30% of potential years of life are lost because of injuries that could have been prevented. What's more, traffic injuries alone result in more than \$200 billion in annual U.S. health expenditures. Overall, injuries account for 12% of medical care spending, totaling as much as \$69 billion per year. Additionally, injuries are consistently among the leading causes of hospitalization for New Yorkers of all age groups and nearly 7,000 New Yorkers die every year as a result of injury.

"We are met with a real and growing public health problem," said Commissioner Hudson. "If we fail to address the issues related to injury and violence, the toll –

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measured in lives lost and health care dollars spent - is only going to get worse in the years to come. Fortunately, we know that virtually all injuries can be prevented. If everyone wore a seatbelt, properly installed and used child safety seats, wore helmets and other safety gear appropriately, and stored cleaning supplies in locked cabinets, we could dramatically reduce the burden of leading injuries in this country and save lives," added Dr. Hudson.

Two-thirds of children killed by bicycle-related injuries could have been saved by wearing a helmet. Helmets reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85% and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88%.

Injury creates significant suffering and financial burden on our society. In order to raise awareness of safety and injury prevention within Orange County, people must take proactive steps to make a difference. By recognizing that injuries are not just accidents, but can be avoided through prevention, community members will enjoy safer, healthier, and happier lives.

For more information about health, safety, and injury prevention, visit the Orange County Department of Health's Healthy Orange website at www.healthyorange.com.

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