

## Don't Be Hard Headed – Wear a Helmet!



It is commonly said that if you ask ten riders a question, you will get ten different answers. But there is one thing we should all agree on - you should never ride a horse without a helmet. Horses are inherently dangerous due to their natural flight instinct. Even the quietest lesson horse is capable of spooking at an unusual object, and even the most experienced riders have falls.

There are many excuses not to wear a helmet – perhaps it is not traditional for your riding discipline, you are just hopping on the horse for a minute, or maybe you just do not want to ruin your hair style. Whatever the justification, it does not hold up when compared to the risk of a traumatic brain injury. When it comes to your brain, why take a chance?

Still not convinced? Studies have shown that...

- Head injuries are the most common reason equestrians are admitted to the hospital.
- All riding types are at risk for brain injury – we all fall!
- Head injuries account for 60% of equestrian related deaths.
- It is estimated that the chance of head injury is greater for equestrians than downhill ski racing, football and motorcycle racing!
- Repeated head injuries, even when mild, can cause cumulative damage – your brain never fully recovers from a traumatic head injury.

Unfortunately, falls are a simple fact of horseback riding. It is our responsibility to ourselves, our friends and family, and our horses to take every precaution we can to minimize that risk. Perhaps the most compelling reason to wear a helmet is the simple fact that a traumatic brain injury could keep you off the horse and out of the barn indefinitely. It only takes a single moment to change your life.

Equine Guelph has many resources to help you keep your head safe. Visit our [videos](#) on helmet safety and fit, and be sure to check out the Helmet Safety Poster at the end. You can also read our previous articles on rider attire, '[Plan A Head](#)' and '[Dressed to Kill – Rider Safety is Always in Fashion](#)'.

### Statistical References

Alberta Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, "[Safety Up – On Equestrian Helmets](#)"

