

With or Against Traffic? How Should You Walk or Bike on the Road?



By Linda Rubin

Driving to and from work to the hospital every day I often see folks biking or walking — good news for their health. Except when they are walking or biking in ways that puts them in danger of being hit by traffic. Needless to say, that is NOT good for their health!

So do you know which side of the road you should walk on when there is no sidewalk? What about biking? Remember:

Walk **AGAINST** traffic; bike **WITH** traffic

WALKING: If there are sidewalks on either side of the road, it does not matter if you walk with or against traffic since the sidewalk offers you protection from vehicles. But if you are on a road either with or without a shoulder you should always walk against traffic ... that is, vehicles should be driving toward you. According to the National Center for

Safe Routes to School www.saferoutesinfo.org, the reason is this: “(walking against traffic) presents opportunities to establish eye contact with approaching motorists and make quick judgments to protect oneself.”

BIKING: When you are on a bicycle, think of yourself as another vehicle on the road. So if you are another vehicle, you should be biking **WITH** traffic. Don't make up traffic rules as you bike along because erratic biking behavior puts you at risk for crashes (studies have shown that a risk of a crash increases **FIVE TIMES** when you ride without regard for rules of traffic). Your goal is blend in with the traffic and help it flow easily. While there may be a fear that you'll be hit from behind by oncoming traffic, the reality is that rear-end collisions between vehicles and bicycles are rare; the most frequent cause of car-bike crashes are from bicyclists riding on the left side of the road. So remember: Ride on the right! Learn more about bicycle safety at: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Bicycles>. 🌱