

## Helmet Safety Instructions

# MELON DROP

This captivating demonstration helps your audience think about the fragility of the human brain and skull and the importance of preventing head trauma through the proper use of a helmet in recreational activities such as cycling. This activity is a great lead into a helmet fitting demonstration. Please note the melon drop is best done in a large auditorium or outside and can be messy!

## SUPPLIES

- **Ripe honeydew melons** (these offer the best helmet fit and their smooth surface are easy to draw faces on). To check for ripeness, shake the melons and listen for the seeds inside; the outer rind should be slightly soft to the touch.
- **Markers or paint** to create the melon's facial expressions. Melons that are to be dropped without helmets should look alarmed; melons dropped wearing helmets should look happy.
- **Helmets** – one for the presenter, one for the melon (\*use a rounded toddler helmet for the melon and pad the inside with extra soft padding. The helmet won't ever fit a melon perfectly and this padding just helps ensure a better, more snug fit).
- **Ladder**
- **Supplies for post-activity clean up**

## OBJECTIVE

The objective here is to observe the effects of a melon dropped at high velocity with and without a helmet. Draw parallels between the melon and the human head and have kids imagine the drop being equivalent to a bicycle crash at moderate speed.

## DIRECTIONS

- Introduce students to both the alarmed and happy melons: the alarmed melon is about to take a fall without a helmet; the happy melon will fall too, but his head will be protected by a helmet. If appropriate ask students about what will happen to each melon on impact.
- The presenter should put on his or her helmet before climbing up the ladder.
- As the presenter heads up the ladder explain the importance of helmets; this dialogue should distract students from the presenter who will give the melon a good squeeze/push at the back which ensures the melon will SPLAT on impact.
- Have students countdown and then drop the melon.
- As the presenter comes down from the ladder and examines the smashed melon, he or she should explain that the best neurosurgeons can't put this head back together.
- Strap the happy melon into its helmet and start up the ladder again.
- Have students countdown again; when ready to drop ensure the helmeted melon is dropped gently straight down.

**Don't forget to clean up the mess after the presentation. And Have Fun!**



Parachute is bringing attention to preventable injury and helping Canadians reduce their risk of injury and enjoy long lives lived to the fullest.

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