



How to Promote Helmet Use: Sample Classroom or Home Helmet Demo Presentations

Summary:

Kids like an active demo, and we suggest four: the melon drop, egg drop, lightbulb drop and jello brain!

The Melon Drop

Materials: 2 ripe melons, 2 helmets, clean up supplies!

- Looking for a dramatic demo for your next group talk to kids? So was Dr. Hal Fenner of the Snell Foundation. He has tested various melons for dropping to the floor, one in a helmet and the other bare. Hal has concluded that the best melon is a not-too-ripe honeydew. Pumpkins can be better, but finding head-sized ones is difficult.
- Take your helmets to the grocery to find the right size honeydew. Shaking the melon tells you which is ripe--you can hear the seeds rattle in ripe honeydew, so avoid the noisy ones.
- Draw smiley faces, or one smiley and one pffffft face on the melons. Hold the helmeted and unhelmeted melons out to your sides, one in each hand, and tip your hands toward the audience to drop them in unison. The unhelmeted honeydew will smash. Whee. The helmet on the other melon will last for three drops, and then split on the fourth one, still preventing the melon from smashing.
- Hal reports that the kids are impressed, and you have their attention right away.

Melon Toss

Materials: One ripe melon; a brick

- Take a ripe melon and give it a toss down the aisle. The toss should be similar to a bowling swing, where you get up speed and let the melon arc downward from gravity as it is propelled forward. The melon will survive, as long as it doesn't hit any object along the way or a wall at the end. Pass it around. Now take the melon, and from a height of five feet, drop it onto the brick below. The melon is damaged. Tell the audience that the angle of incident is crucial. A person may survive moderate or high speed forward propulsion as long as the head is protected and there is no object in the way. But, even an object that's not moving forward at all will shatter from a direct angle of impact to the ground. Only a helmet will help in this case.

The Jello Brain

Materials: Jello mold, jello mix, water.

- Only your imagination limits you in the use of the famous Jello brain mold, a mold that you fill with gray or pink jello to make a model of the brain. You can order one from [Archie McPhee](#)



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Egg Drop

Materials: Sand, brick, bucket, two eggs

- Have one member of the audience come forward and identify what you have in the bucket (dry sand). Have him/her stand on a secure chair or step stool and drop an egg from a height of ten feet into the bucket. The egg should not break. Next, take out a spare egg and ask the audience what minimum height is needed to break this egg against a brick sitting on the table. (It will crack at about one-half inch, and will explode at 3-6 inches.) Explain to the audience that a fall from a height of just 2-3 feet to concrete will destroy most brains. The average bicyclist sits 4-5 feet about the ground. Helmets are needed to reduce injury and death from falls.

Computer Drop

Materials: One useless computer, camera or other expensive-looking object

- Hold the item five feet above the floor. Drop it. Explain that there may be a way to fix the object, but it takes lots of time, lots of money, and the item may never be the same or work properly. Explain that the human brain suffers at least as much damage when dropped. There is no neurosurgeon alive today who can replace destroyed brain tissue. The memories and functions in these tissues will be reduced or lost forever.

Light Bulb Drop

Materials: Light bulb, plastic wrap, rubber band, helmet

- Wrap a light bulb in heavy duty kitchen plastic wrap. Secure the bottom with a rubber band. Tape the wrapped bulb into a bicycle helmet. Drop the helmet top down from above your head onto a hard, flat surface. The light bulb will not break. Now drop the light bulb without the helmet. The bulb will shatter. Do not use this helmet again for riding, although with only a light bulb inside it should last indefinitely for more demos. Be sure it is marked "demo only - not for riding." Do not use the shattered light bulb either! This demo was developed by Dane Luhrsen, founder of the now-defunct Ride Safe.

-Ideas compiled from www.bhsi.org