

HYDRATION

The MS 150 is a challenging athletic event. Knowing how to replenish your body's loss of fluid and nutrition is the key to successfully completing the ride without serious injury or need for medical attention.

Hydration begins as early as one to two days before the ride. It is recommended to drink 8—12 glasses of water each day. To stay well hydrated during the ride, try to drink a minimum of a water bottle each hour. Rest stops are placed at regular intervals to provide you with plenty of opportunities to eat and drink.

If you find that you experience one or more of these symptoms including extreme fatigue, the inability to recover your energy, and frequent muscle cramps, seek assistance from our medical crew—you may have the early signs of dehydration.

KNOW THE LINGO

Group cycling has its own form of communication. The presence of road hazards, directions, and “need to know” information is relayed through the pack of riders by gestures and words. The following are the most common terms you may hear in group sponsored rides and tours:

- **“On your left”**-This means a rider is approaching your left side. Allow room to pass. May also be called out “on your right”.
- **“Car Back”**-This means a car is approaching from the rear. All riders make an effort to move to the right of the road in a single file until the car passes. It is state law that cyclists ride no more than two abreast. This ensures that traffic will not be impeded, and will make passing easier and safer for the cyclists.

Welcome to the Ride

First time participants and returning cyclists; welcome to the Michigan MS 150, one of the best supported and most enjoyable organized rides in the state! The National MS Society and Michigan MS 150 proudly offers this experience of a lifetime to cyclists of all levels and abilities who choose to join us in our mission to end the devastating effects of multiple sclerosis.

Experience has taught us that cyclists on public roads need to have some basic bike handling skills and knowledge in order to keep themselves and the others around them safe, especially in large group situations.

We encourage you to take individual responsibility for your personal safety and the safety of all cyclists riding with you. Please be aware of cross traffic, farm equipment and narrow lanes with minimal shoulders as they present very real dangers to cyclists. We will ride through areas where many stop signs will be encountered. Please be reminded that cyclists must stop at these signs, as is the law.

The focus of the National MS Society is to provide a quality cycling experience by taking a strong position on safety while ensuring a fun time is had by all those involved. For this reason, tips on group riding, bike maintenance, managing road hazards, and cycling rules of the road have been included. It is our hope that you will find this information useful, and easy to incorporate into all your cycling experiences.

**Thank You: 2006 Michigan MS 150 brochure
Coach Joseph Noack (jnoack@attglobal.net).**

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SAFETY in Group Cycling

SAFETY & SKILLS

HELMET SMART

Head injuries are common among cyclists. Even falling at a slow rate of speed can cause head injuries. It is a requirement that:

- **Helmets are to be worn while riding in the MS 150—no exceptions.**

Michigan State Law and Cyclists

- Cyclists must obey all traffic laws while on the road.
- Cyclists must ride in the same direction as traffic as far to the right as is safe, and no more than two abreast in a single lane. *Exceptions are for turning left at an intersection and when passing another vehicle.
- Use hand signals when turning or slowing.
- If riding 1/2 hour before sunrise or 1/2 hour after sunset you must have head and tail lights in addition to the bike's reflectors

- **“Debris”**- **“Road kill”**- **“Gravel”**- Point well ahead on the side of the hazard. Follow through as the hazard approaches to alert the riders behind you while moving safely to the side opposite the obstacle. If riding in the front, you are the eyes of the pack.
- **“Flat”**- This indicates that a rider has suffered a flat tire. Allow enough room for the rider to slow and exit completely off of the road for repair, reducing any hazards.
- **“Slowing”**- The cyclist in front of you is slowing down. Use caution and prepare to stop.
- **“Stopping”**- This indicates that a rider ahead is stopping. Do not forget to unclip from your pedals.

Remember to pass all communication on to the next cyclist in the group. Speak loudly, and clearly.



INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- ◆ CYCLING LINGO
- ◆ BIKE MAINTENANCE
- ◆ RIDING IN A PACK
- ◆ CARS, DOGS, PEDESTRIANS
- ◆ REST STOPS & OTHER MS 150 TIPS

GROUP RIDING & BIKE MAINTENANCE

BICYCLE MAINTENANCE SAFETY CHECKLIST

All cyclists are responsible for keeping their riding equipment in good working order. If you are new to cycling, or have never really given regular bike maintenance a second thought, this brief checklist is for you. Get into the habit of checking your bicycle and equipment before every ride. Even small adjustments can be the difference between a successful finish and a terrible experience. With your pencil ready, check off each of the items on this list before you ride.

- Check your wheels for worn tires, loose spokes, warped rims and proper inflation.
- Check your handlebar for looseness at the headset and stem.
- Check brakes: cable tightness, worn pads, alignment of the pads with the rims.
- Check your saddle for seat post bolt tightness and proper fit.
- Check for chain looseness and bad links; clean regularly. Lubricate with bicycle chain lube.
- Check the derailleur for worn cogs and adjustment. Check that your gears change smoothly, look for worn cogs.
- Check your pedals and cranks for tightness.
- Check your shoes: tight cleats, straps and buckles in good repair.
- Check your helmet for proper fit and worn straps.

PREVENT ACCIDENTS—have a well prepared bike

**REMEMBER TO ALWAYS CARRY ID,
Fill out the back of the Rider Number with: EMERGENCY CONTACT
INSURANCE CARD, & IMPORTANT HEALTH INFORMATION.**

RIDING IN A PACK THE BASICS

Pack riding takes practice. Riding with other cyclists in front of you, on your right and left sides and behind you may cause you to feel trapped. RELAX. The most important aspect of riding close to others is to create your own safety zone. This may vary depending on the speed and ability level of the people you are with, so be FLEXIBLE. Let others know of your insecurity—they may also be new at this. Your responsibility in a pack includes the following:

- Communicate well in advance. Use gestures in combination with LOUD verbal calls to indicate road hazards, turns, etc.
- Ride with your head up. Look down the road instead of the person in front of you.
- Know your limits. Accidents occur when inexperienced riders do not have the bike handling skills to make quick decisions in a pack.
- Never overlap your wheels with another cyclist.
- Do not use aero bars in a pack or in pace lines.
- Pack mentality is not always safe. Expect to STOP at all red lights and stop signs—IT IS THE LAW.
- Adjust your safety zone to fit the conditions of the road, weather and traffic. Always have an escape route planned.

COMMUNICATE IN A PACK

SPECIAL SITUATIONS CARS, DOGS, & PEDESTRIANS

Many cyclists find that whether riding alone or in a group, situations occur which require quick thinking and heightened bike handling skills. Passing cars, unleashed dogs, and pedestrians are just some of the most common. These are suggestions for managing potential obstacles.

- ◆ **CARS** can be scary. Drivers do not know your skill level and will often not leave room when they pass. Give them the room. In a group, call out “CAR BACK” and move to the far right in a single file. Be predictable.
- ◆ **DOGS** can cause panic and accidents in a pack. Knowing how to handle dogs on a bicycle varies depending on the situation. You may want to slow down, out sprint him, yell “STOP”, “NO”, or “GO HOME”. Distracting a dog with a water bottle or pepper spray should only be used when you are not in a pack. Try to keep to one side of the dog. If a pack splits around him, he has no place to go and will get caught up in the middle of the pack. Be predictable and let others know of your intentions.
- ◆ **PEDESTRIANS** and joggers have the right-of-way. Signal the pack that a person is being overtaken and move to allow room for safe passing.

REST STOPS & OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

Frequently, cyclists encounter unforeseen circumstances while on their bicycles. In the MS 150 these situations are easily managed with our active team of support including SAG vehicles, motorcycle support and volunteers. Here are a few additional suggestions to help keep everyone safe on the ride.

- Signaling a SAG vehicle is easy to do. SAG vehicles will stop for you if you are off the road, off your bike and are waving your helmet.
- Rest stops are a welcome sight for cyclists who may want a break to stretch, drink and eat before continuing. Unfortunately they can also be a source of frustration and possible danger when riders do not utilize them properly. All cyclists who are stopping at a rest area must pull over to the far right, dismount and move completely off the road. Re-entering cyclists need to move beyond the rest area and proceed with caution on the right hand side of the road before merging with the faster cyclists.
- Passing others, and being passed will occur continuously during the ride. Communication and passing on the left is the best method for safety when passing. Call out “On your Left” and allow time for the cyclist being overtaken to move to the right—then pass safely. Accidents happen when a group of cyclists split around a slower rider passing both on the left and right giving the rider little choice, but to hold a straight line.
- Examine all mechanicals and change all flats completely off the road. If it is a problem you cannot fix yourself, flag down a SAG vehicle and look for mechanical support at the next rest stop.

SAFE CYCLING IS FUN