

Bicycle Helmets



Riding bikes is a great way for families to have fun and spend time together outside. However, riding a bike can also be dangerous. Every year, thousands of children are injured in bike crashes. The good news is that many serious injuries can be prevented by wearing a helmet. Before your kids take off on their bikes this summer, make sure they have a helmet that fits them. It will protect their heads and could save their lives.

How to Ride Safely

- Ride with traffic, not against it. Stay to the right.
- Follow all traffic signs. Stop at red lights and stop signs.
- Walk the bike across busy streets. Look left, right, and left again before crossing.
- Do not ride at dusk or after dark.
- Children younger than 1 year of age should not be on bikes. Their neck muscles may not be strong enough to control their heads during a sudden stop, especially with the added weight of a helmet.
- Children younger than 10 should ride on a sidewalk or bike path instead of the street. Most young children are not able to make safe choices in traffic.
- Make sure the seat and handlebars of the bike fit your child.
- Know a child's limits. Tell your child where and when he can ride.
- **The most important step you can take to prevent bike-related brain injuries is to buy your child a helmet and make sure he wears it every time he rides!**

Why are Helmets Important?

- Every year in the U.S., almost 400,000 children visit the emergency department with bike-related injuries.
- The most common injuries are bruises, cuts and broken bones, but the most serious are head injuries.
- 9 out of 10 bike riders who die in crashes are not wearing helmets.
- Wearing a bike helmet can lower the risk of brain injury by up to 88 percent.

Where Can I Get a Helmet?

- Helmets cost as little as \$10 and can be found at retail stores.
- Some community programs offer free or discounted helmets for families who cannot afford one.

How Do I Pick the Right Helmet?

- Let your child help pick out a helmet that he or she likes. Choose a bright color to help drivers see your child.
- Look for the CPSC Certified label on the box.
- Try the helmet on your child. It should be snug, but not tight.
- If your child is between 2 sizes, pick the bigger one. Most helmets come with extra pads to help you get a good fit.
- If it feels too tight, try using thinner pads. If it is still too tight, buy a larger helmet.
- The helmet should not move from side to side when your child shakes his head.
- Replace any helmet that is damaged or that has been involved in a crash.

How Do I Fit the Helmet Correctly?

1. The helmet should sit flat on top the head and rest 1 or 2 finger-widths above the eyebrows. The forehead must be covered.
2. The straps should form a “V” below your child’s ear.
3. The chin strap should be buckled snugly under the jaw. No more than 1 or 2 fingers should fit under the strap.

