

Many injuries happen in predictable, preventable ways.

Two of 3 bicycle crash deaths involve head injury. Research shows bicycle helmets are 88% effective in preventing or reducing the severity of a head injury.

If every bicycle rider wore a helmet for every ride, it could save 1 life every day and prevent 1 head injury every 4 minutes.

How to Make a Bicycle Helmet Fit Properly

- Only purchase a bicycle helmet that meets Consumer Product Safety Standards. There will be a CPSC sticker inside the helmet. Older helmet should be ANSI-, ASTM-, or Snell-approved; look for these labels inside the helmet or on packaging materials.
- Helmets come in a variety of shapes and sizes from extra small to extra large. Try the helmet on and adjust it properly before use.
- A bicycle helmet comes with a fitting ring or a packet of foam pads to make the helmet fit better. Always adjust the pads before you adjust the straps. Keep the extra helmet pads in case you need them later. Some helmets also have a stabilizer on the back of the helmet.
- A bicycle helmet will also have adjustable straps to position the helmet and keep it securely on the head. Always fasten the adjustable strap under the chin.
- Adjust the velcro pads and straps as the child grows. Straps may loosen over time and need to be tightened periodically.
- A good fitting bicycle helmet should sit level over the eyebrows with no more than two fingers of space between the helmet and brows. The helmet should fit snugly (but not uncomfortably tight) and should not rock from side-to-side or back and forth.
- Replace a bicycle helmet that has been in a crash or has been damaged.

Helmet Fit Checklist

- Is the helmet level?
- Is the front rim barely visible when the rider looks up?
- Do the side straps make a Y shape just below the ear?
- Is the chin strap snug?
- Does the skin near the rider's eyebrows move slightly when the helmet is moved side to side or front to back?
- Is the stabilizer snug on the back of the head?
- Is it comfortable?
- Palm test. Have the rider push up and back on the front of the helmet using the palm. If the helmet moves more than an inch, the pads or straps need to be adjusted.
- Shake test. Have the rider shake their head side-to-side and nod up and down. If the helmet moves, the straps needs to be adjusted.

Internet Resources

(including links to helmet fit videos)

- Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute: <http://www.bhsi.org/fitshort.htm>
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Bicycles>
- Consumer Reports: <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/babies-kids/school-age-kids/bike-helmets/bike-helmet-guide/bike-helmets-for-kids/index.htm>
- Consumer Product Safety Commission: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/bikepubs.html>

Live Injury-Free!