GOTTA Brain GETTA HELMET

No Helmet. No Bike...
IT'S THE LAW!

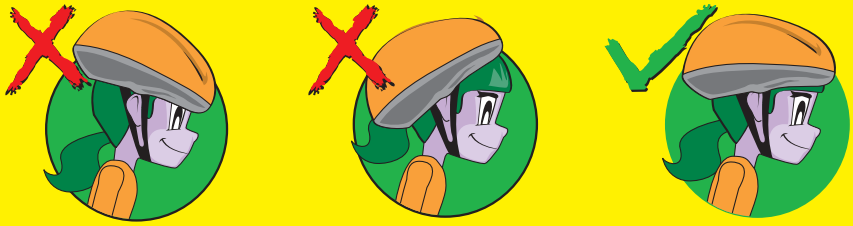
Above photo of David courtesy of Grey Nuns Hospital.

One summer day, a young boy named David was riding his bike in a park, like so many children his age do daily. David was not wearing a cycling helmet. As he rode over a pile of shale, he lost control of his bike and fell sideways, hitting his head on a concrete parking marker.

That's right, David simply fell off his bike - no car hit him, no friend bumped him. It is that easy. David was lucky. Today, he leads a normal life working on a career in education. He is a strong advocate of helmet use & legislation. He always wears a helmet when he rides his bike. David would like you to learn from his experience, be headstrong and wear your helmet while cycling. You only have one brain - PROTECT IT.

David today - headstrong.

Below, Doolie shows us how to be headstrong.



Doolie illustrations courtesy of Alberta Transportation

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Sport Medicine Council of Alberta • Sport Central • Tegler Foundation • United Cycle

GOTTA Brain GETTA HELMET

No Helmet. No Bike...
IT'S THE LAW!

Have you checked your helmet lately? Your child's helmet? Use the checklists below to help you keep your helmet working & fitting properly.

Helmet Structure Checklist:

- ☐ **The structure of the helmet is acceptable**
  - Check the shell & liner of the helmet for cracks or dents.
  - Ensure all fasteners and clips are working properly.
  - Examine retention straps for wear, cuts or frayed edges.
- ☐ **The helmet meets proper safety standards**
  - Check the inside of the helmet for a sticker that displays CPSC, CSA, ANSI or Snell approval for cycling.
- ☐ **The helmet is less than five years old**
  - A helmet should be replaced every 3 - 5 years.
- ☐ **The helmet has not suffered a large impact**
  - Any helmet that has been worn during a crash, a fall, or has been hit hard should be inspected by a qualified retail outlet to ensure it is still in good condition and will properly protect your head.

Helmet Fit Checklist

- ☐ **Is level from front to back and sits 2 finger widths (approx. 3 cm) above the eyebrows.**
- ☐ **Sits squarely on top of the head protecting the forehead and the base of the skull (back of the head).**
- ☐ **Fits snugly so it does not slide around on the head.**
- ☐ **Can only be removed by undoing the retention straps.**

For more information, please contact KIDSAFE Connection at 407.7250 or email kidsafe@cha.ab.ca

KIDSAFE CONNECTION

LOUIS GARNEAU®

UNITED Cycle Est. 1928

PECIAL THANKS TO ARTISTS:
RAVON BUSEY
AND JOSHUA DUPRE

CREATED
BY
CANDICE DISCEPOLO
SAFE KIDS @ WOODMARK

BIKE SAFETY

Do you every feel a little shakey riding on the street?

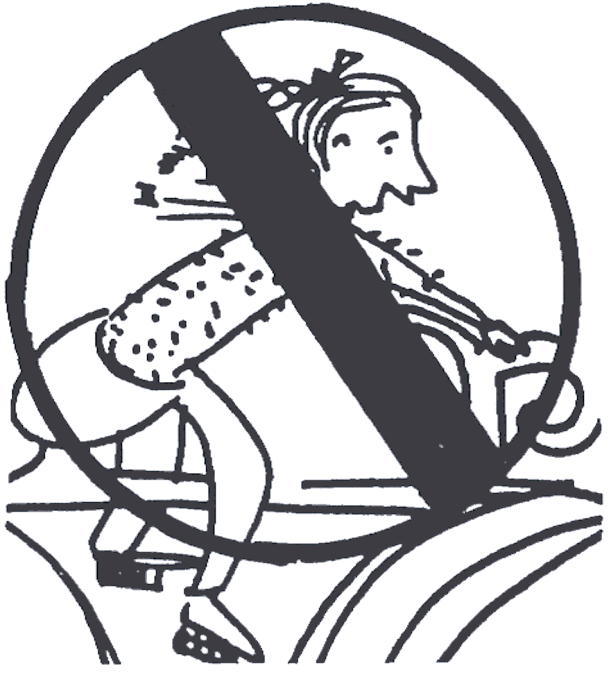
If you answered yes, open the brochure to learn some important bike safety tips.

Have a light on your bike if you ride after dark!

Wear bright colors when you ride!

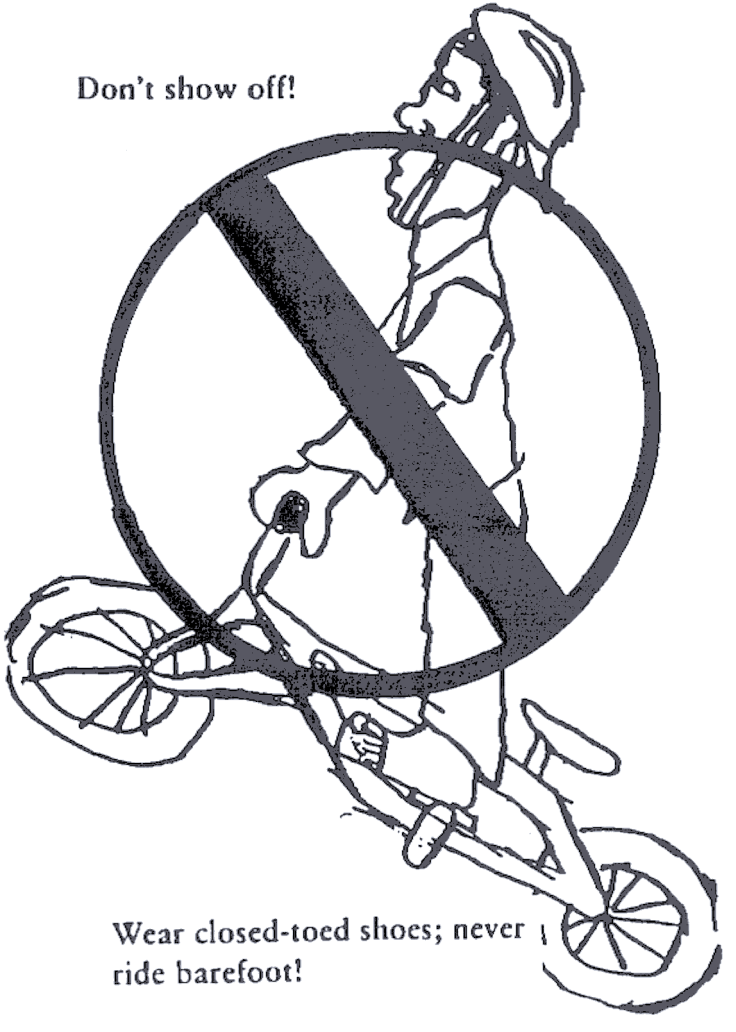
Have reflectors on your bike!

Always wear a helmet!



Always check equipment (brakes, horns, lights, tires, helmit, etc.) before riding!

Don't show off!



Wear closed-toed shoes; never ride barefoot!

Ride single file!

Follow the rules of the road!

What you need to know

Does my child really need one?

The simple answer is yes. Laws now require helmets in many areas. That is because medical research shows that a bicycle helmet can prevent 85% of cyclists' head injuries. More than 600 bicycle riders are killed in the U.S. every year, almost all in collisions with cars, and 75% of them die of head injuries. Many thousands more suffer less severe but still debilitating injuries that are far worse than the physical pain of scraped skin or even broken bones. Your child can suffer permanent personality changes and learning disabilities from a brain injury, and both of you will be aware of what they have lost. Common long-term effects include concentration difficulties, aggressiveness, headaches and balance problems. Imagine your anguish if this happens to your child.

What will it cost?

Helmets sell in bike shops or by mail order from $20 up, or in discount stores for $10 or even less. A good shop helps with fitting, and fit is important for safety. A discount helmet can be equally protective if you take the time to fit it carefully on your child. Helmets are cheap for their benefit, so don't wait for a sale.

Do I buy a new one every year?

No. Heads grow less than legs and feet. Many child helmets come with two or even three sets of foam fitting pads. You can start with thick pads and use the thinner pads as your child's head grows. The fitting pads do not affect the impact protection of the helmet, which is provided by the firmer crushable polystyrene foam (picnic cooler foam).

Will my child actually use it?

Yes, if other children wear one, their parents use one, the teacher at school has told them how much good helmets do, and the child has picked out the one they really want. No, if the helmet makes your child feel like a geek, nobody else uses one and it does not fit well. Perhaps yes if you have the will to enforce the rule. Most situations fall somewhere in between, and you know your child best. Seventh grade seems to be the most resisting age for helmets, when the feeling of invincibility is strong and the rage for fashion is undeniable. The key motivator of helmet use for kids is fashion, not safety. Try to make use of that.

Does a Toddler Need a Helmet?

A child of any age needs head protection when riding, but a toddler's neck may not support the weight of a helmet. For this and other reasons, nobody in the injury prevention community recommends riding with a child under one year old. If in doubt, take child and helmet to a pediatrician for advice. Child helmets need ventilation in hot weather, since the foam holds heat in. Toddler heads vary in shape, so pay careful attention to fit. The helmet should sit level on the child's head, and fit securely with the strap fastened.

What about standards?

Helmets for sale in the U.S. must meet the US Consumer Product Safety Commission standard and state that on a sticker inside. Fit is not tested by the standards, so you have to try the helmet on your child's head.

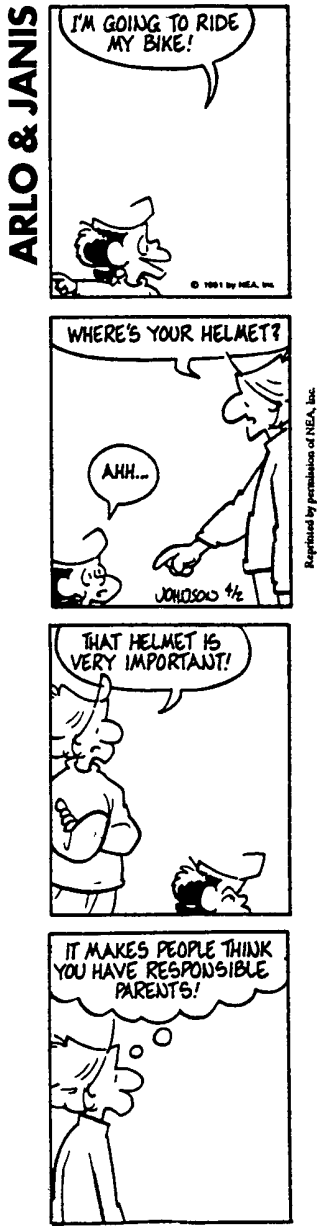
Which one should I buy?

There are many good helmets on the market. A Consumer Reports article in June 2006 recommended the Bell Boomerang for toddlers and Bell Trigger or Schwinn Intercept for older kids. You can read the article for free at www.consumer.org. But in fact you can choose based on how well a helmet fits your child and which one your child likes. And the price, of course!

How to Buy

Pick up a helmet with a smooth shell in a bright color. Check for a pinch-proof buckle. Put it on your child, adjust the straps and pads or the inner one-size-fits-all ring, and then make sure it will not come off.

First, A Chuckle



When to Replace a Helmet?

Replace any helmet when your child crashes in it. Impact crushes some of the foam. The helmet is less protective although the damage may not be readily visible. Helmets soften impact, so the child may not even be aware that their head hit until you examine the helmet for damage. Replace the buckle if it cracks or if any piece of it breaks off. Nobody prompts you to replace your child's helmet, so give it some thought.

Bike Helmets for Other Sports?

The ASTM standards for biking and inline skating are identical, so a bike helmet is fine for normal inline skating. There is no standard for tricycle or scooter helmets, but bicycle helmets should work well for them. Aggressive extreme trick skating and skateboard helmets have a different ASTM standard, for multiple hits but lesser impacts. Most bike helmets are not made for that, although a few of them are. Skate helmets may not meet bike helmet requirements unless they have a CPSC bike standard sticker inside. Helmets for equestrian sports also have a unique design to resist a hoof.

Warning: No Helmets on Playgrounds!

In 1999 the first US death involving a bike helmet catching on playground equipment occurred. There have been other near misses. **Be sure to teach your children to remove their helmets before using playground equipment or climbing trees!**

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We are all volunteers, funded by consumers like you!

A Bicycle Helmet for My Child

Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute
A consumer-funded program of the
Washington Area Bicyclist Association
www.helmets.org

Children act differently in traffic than adults

Children are children, not young adults. It's important to understand their limitations in understanding traffic.

Specifically, children:

- Have a narrower field of vision than adults, about 1/3 less.
- Cannot easily judge a car's speed and distance.
- Assume that if they can see a car, its driver must be able to see them. However, children are easily hidden from view by parked cars and other objects.
- Cannot readily tell the direction a sound is coming from.
- May be impatient and impulsive.
- Concentrate on only one thing at a time. This is likely not to be traffic.
- Have a limited sense of danger.
- Often mix fantasy with reality.
- Imitate the (often bad) behavior of others, especially older children and adults.

Ten ways to help children become better pedestrians and cyclists

1. Give your child only as much independence and responsibility as s/he can handle safely. Throughout childhood, children slowly develop the cognitive, perceptual and sensory skills necessary to be safe in traffic.

2. Remember that each child is unique. Do not base rules for one child on those for siblings, cousins or neighbors. Children of the same age may require different levels of supervision in traffic.

3. Evaluate your child's behavior out of traffic. Is s/he impulsive? Does s/he stop to think before acting? Distractable? Can s/he sustain attention on something important? Is s/he a risk-taker? It is likely that your child's behavior in traffic will resemble behavior out of traffic.

4. Consider any limitations your child has and how these might influence his or her behavior in traffic. For example, does your child have vision problems? Hearing impairment? Cognitive or judgment limitations? Physical handicaps?

5. Give your child practice in traffic. Frequent supervised experiences can help children develop good traffic safety habits.

6. Teach your child the rules of walking and bicycling safety as you encounter traffic situations. Ask your children to repeat rules back to you.

7. Do not assume your child will follow the rules just because s/he can verbalize them. Let your child lead you in traffic to help you assess how well s/he follows the rules. Set up situations with your child in which you shadow him/her (walk 10-15 feet behind) to allow semi-independence.

8. Grant independence in small steps to see how your child handles it. For example, let your child progress from playing in front of the house to playing on the block, to walking around the block, to crossing one street, etc.

Children are not Young adults!

The excitement of your child's first steps. The thrill of their being able to balance a bicycle without training wheels. These are among the fondest memories of any child's growth and development.

For the child, these events are early steps towards independence. No longer are they dependent on their parents for mobility. But this independence is filled with hazards, as the unsuspecting child encounters cars, trucks and their drivers in what the child considers his or her play space.

Open this brochure to discover the problems children have in traffic, simply because they are children. You will also find ways to help your child become a better pedestrian and bicyclist, and for you to become a better driver.

9. Always model appropriate traffic safety practices yourself, whether you are walking, bicycling or driving! Children learn from important people around them.

10. Be a careful driver, watch for children who may not yet have developed good traffic safety habits. Their safety is in your hands.

This publication produced by
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University of Wisconsin - Madison.

For more information on bicycling and walking in Madison call 608-266-6225 or email Arthur Ross, Bike Ped Coordinator at aross@ci.madison.wi.us

This pamphlet was distributed by the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute on behalf of TransMadison because we found it enlightening and wanted to pass it on.

How Children See Traffic

Help your child be a better pedestrian and bicyclist

TransMadison
The Word is Getting Around

The Four Minute Fitting Guide

Your objective: Snug, Level, Stable

You want the helmet to be comfortably touching the head all the way around, level and stable enough to resist even violent shakes or hard blows and stay in place. It should be as low on the head as possible to maximize side coverage, and held level on the head with the strap comfortably snug.

Be Prepared for the Worst

Heads come in many sizes and shapes. You should be prepared for the possibility that the helmet you are trying to fit may not work on this particular head. And unfortunately, you can expect to spend ten to fifteen minutes to get a helmet fitted right.

First, Use the Fit Pads or Ring

Helmets that fit with pads come with at least one set of foam fitting pads, and if you got a second set of thicker pads it can be used to customize the shape. For starters, you can often remove the top pad entirely or use the thinnest ones. This lowers the helmet on the head, bringing its protection down further on the sides. It may reduce the flow of cooling air slightly, but probably not enough to notice.

Adjust the side fit pads by using thicker pads on the side if your head is narrow and there is a space, or thinner pads in the back for longer heads. You may also move pads around, particularly on the "corners" in the front and rear. Leaving some gaps will promote air flow. The pads should touch your head evenly all the way around, without being too tight. The helmet should sit level on the head, with the front one finger width above the eyebrows, or if the rider uses glasses, just above the frame of the glasses. If you walk into a wall, the helmet should hit before your nose does!

Some helmets use a fitting ring instead of pads. With these "one size fits all" models you begin by adjusting the size of the ring. Some of them may require the ring so tight for real stability on your head that they feel binding, but if loosening the ring produces a sloppy fit, that helmet is not for you.

Then, Adjust the Straps

Now put the helmet on and fasten the buckle. Be sure the front is in front! You want to adjust it to the "Eye-Ear-Mouth" test developed by the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. When you look upward the front rim should be barely visible to your **eye**, the Y of the side straps should meet just below your **ear**, and the chin strap should be snug against the jaw so that when you open your **mouth** very wide you should feel the helmet pull down a little bit.

With the helmet level on your head, adjust the rear straps, then the front straps, to locate the Y fitting where the straps meet just under your ear. You may have to slide the straps across the top of the helmet to get them even on both sides. Then adjust the chin strap so it is comfortably snug. Now adjust the rear stabilizer if the helmet has one. It keeps the helmet from jiggling and makes it feel more stable, but only a well-adjusted strap can keep it on in a crash.

When you think the straps are right, shake your head around. Then put your palm under the front edge and push up and back. Can you move the helmet more than an inch from level, exposing your forehead? If so, tighten the strap in front of your ear. Now reach back and pull up on the back edge. Can you move the helmet more than an inch? If so, tighten the rear strap. When you are done, your helmet should be level, feel solid on your head and be comfortable. It should not bump on your glasses (if it does, tighten the rear strap). You should forget you are wearing it most of the time, just like a seat belt or a good pair of shoes. If it still does not fit that way, keep working with the straps and pads, or try another helmet.

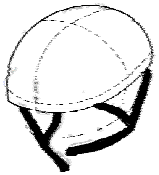
Strap Creep

Now lock in the fit you have achieved to prevent "strap creep" over time. Lock the side buckles carefully if you can. Or wrap rubber bands around the strap and snug them up under the side buckles so they won't slip. You can even sew the straps with a needle and thread. **You' re Done!**

The Quick Summary

Helmets are not just hats! They must be level on your head and strapped on securely to be protective in a crash.

- **You want the helmet to be level on the head, not tilted back or sideways.**
- **You want the fitting pads inside to be touching all the way around.**
- **You want the strap to be comfortably snug.**
- **With the strap fastened you should not be able to get the helmet off with any combination of twisting and tugging**
- **The helmet should not bump on glasses or sunglasses in the front.**
- **The helmet should be comfortable enough to forget that it is on your head after only a few minutes.**
- **It will take you more fiddling time than you expect to get it this way!**



If you have 4 more minutes, read on!

When to Replace a Helmet?

Replace any helmet if you crash. Impact crushes some of the foam, although the damage may not be visible. Helmets work so well that you need to examine them for marks, dents or foam crush to know if you hit. No one ever complains about the cost of replacing a crashed bike helmet. Most manufacturers recommend replacement after five years. We think that depends on usage, and most helmets given reasonable care are good for longer than that. We are not aware of any crash yet where helmet age was a factor. But if your helmet dates back to the 70's, it's time to replace it for today's improved impact performance. Otherwise you may get more added protection from fitting your current helmet carefully than from buying a new one. Replace the buckle if it cracks or any piece breaks off.

Warning: Children must always remove helmets before climbing on playground equipment or trees, where a helmet can snag and choke them.

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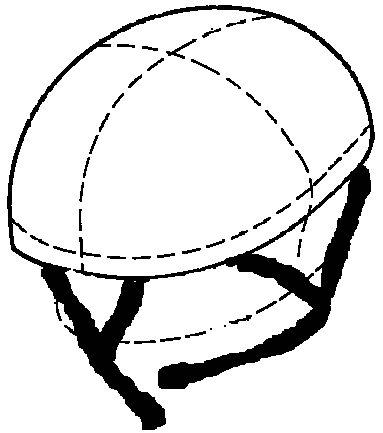
How to Fit A Bicycle Helmet



Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute

A consumer-funded program of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association

www.helmets.org

The Six Minute Guide

Need One? Yes!!

The average careful bike rider may still crash about every 4,500 miles. Head injuries cause 75% of our 500+ annual bicycle deaths. Medical research shows that bike helmets can prevent 85% of cyclists' head injuries. And helmets may be required by law in your area.

How Does a Bicycle Helmet Work?

A helmet reduces the peak energy of a sharp impact. This requires a layer of stiff foam to cushion the blow. Most bicycle helmets do this with crushable expanded polystyrene (EPS), the white picnic cooler foam. EPS works well, but when crushed it does not recover. A similar foam called expanded polypropylene (EPP) does recover, but is much less common. Another foam called EPU (expanded polyurethane) is used in Taiwan. It has a uniform cell structure and crushes without rebound, but is heavier than EPS and its manufacturing process is not environmentally friendly. Other foams are beginning to appear that may offer promise. The spongy foam pads inside a helmet are for comfort and fit, not for impact protection.

The helmet must stay on your head even when you hit more than once--usually a car first, and then the road, or several trees on a mountainside. So it needs a strong strap and an equally strong buckle. The helmet should sit level on your head and cover as much as possible. Above all, with the strap fastened you should not be able to get the helmet off your head by any combination of pulling or twisting. If it comes off or slips enough to leave large areas of your head unprotected, adjust the straps again or try another helmet. Keep the strap comfortably snug when riding.

What Type Do I Need?

Most helmets are made of EPS foam with a thin plastic shell. The shell helps the helmet skid easily on rough pavement to avoid jerking your neck. The shell also holds the foam together after the first impact. Some excellent helmets are made by molding foam in the shell rather than adding the shell later.

Beware of gimmicks. You want a smoothly rounded outer shell, with no sharp ribs or snag points. Excessive vents mean less foam contacting your head, which could concentrate force on one point. "Aero" helmets are not noticeably faster, and in a crash the "tail" could snag or knock the helmet aside. Skinny straps are less comfortable. Dark helmets are hard for motorists to see. Rigid visors can snag or shatter in a fall. Helmet standards do not address these problems--it's up to you!

Standards

A sticker inside the helmet tells what standard it meets. Helmets made for U.S. sale must meet the US Consumer Product Safety Commission standard, so look for a CPSC sticker. ASTM's standard is comparable. Snell's B-95 and N-94 standards are tougher but seldom used. The weak ANSI Z90.4 standard is dead. Fit is not certified by any standard, so test that on your own head. Visors are not tested for shattering or snagging in a fall, so you are on your own there.

Comfort

Coolness, ventilation, fit and sweat control are the most critical comfort needs. Air flow over the head determines coolness, and larger front vents provide better air flow. Most current helmets have adequate cooling for most riders. Sweat control can require a brow pad or separate sweatband. A snug fit with no pressure points ensures comfort and correct position on the head when you crash. Weight is not an issue with today's helmets.

How to Buy

When you pick up a helmet, look first for a CPSC sticker inside and a smooth shell with a bright color outside. Put it on, adjust the pads and straps or the one-size-fits-all head ring, and then try hard to tear it off. Look for vents and sweat control. Helmets sell in bike shops or by mail order from $25-up, or in discount stores for as little as $8. A good shop helps with fitting, and fit is important for safety. A discount helmet can be equally protective if you take the time to fit it carefully. Helmets are cheap now, so don't wait for a sale. Many of us bought our helmets after a crash. You can be smarter than that.

Brands

Consumer Reports rated helmets in June 2006. They tested very few helmets. The Bell Citi and Bell Slant were Best Buys, and the Specialized Aurora was also rated highly for impact. The Schwinn Intercept (Best Buy) and Bell Trigger/Alibi were recommended for youth. The Bell Boomerang was rated best for toddlers. You can read the article for free at www.consumer.org.

The Two Minute Summary

- **You always need a helmet wherever you ride. You can expect to crash in your next 4,500 miles of riding, or maybe much sooner than that!**
- **Even a low-speed fall on a bicycle path can scramble your brains.**
- **Laws in at least 21 states and 148 localities require helmets.**
- **Make sure your helmet fits to get all the protection you are paying for. A good fit means level on your head, touching all around, comfortably snug but not tight.**
- **Standards are no longer a big issue, but check inside for the CPSC sticker.**
- **Common sense tells you to avoid a helmet with snag points sticking out, tiny vents, excessive vents, an extreme "aero" shape, dark colors, thin straps, overly fussy adjustments or a rigid visor that could shatter or snag in a fall.**
- **Pick white or a bright color to be sure that motorists and other cyclists can see you.**
- ***Consumer Reports* in June, 2006 top rated Bell Citi, Bell Slant, Specialized Aurora, Schwinn Intercept for youth and Bell Boomerang for toddlers. The article is free at www.consumer.org.**

If you have 6 more minutes, read on!

Special Problems

Some head shapes require more fiddling with fit pads and straps. Extra small heads may need thick fitting pads. Extra large heads require an XXL or the huge Bell Kinghead. Ponytail ports can improve fit for those with long hair. Bald riders avoid helmets with big top vents to prevent tan lines. For a softer landing, seniors need a thicker, less dense model without huge vents.

When to Replace a Helmet?

Replace any helmet if you crash. Impact crushes some of the foam, but the damage may not be visible. Helmets dull impact, so you need to look for marks or dents to know if you hit. Most manufacturers recommend replacement after five years. We think that depends on usage, and most helmets given reasonable care are good for longer than that. Replace the buckle if it cracks or a piece breaks off. No one requires you to replace your helmet, so give it some thought.

Bike Helmets for Skating?

The ASTM standards for biking and inline skating are identical. But extreme, trick, aggressive skating and skateboard helmets have their own ASTM standard, designed for multiple hits with lesser impact severity. **Do not use a skate helmet for bicycling unless it has a CPSC bicycle helmet standard sticker inside!**

Warning: Children must remove helmets before climbing on playground equipment or trees, where a helmet can snag and choke them.

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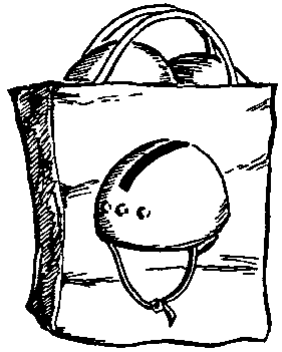
A Consumer's Guide to Bicycle Helmets



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Getting Your Kids to Wear Bike Helmets

Question: How do I get my reluctant child to wear a helmet?

Here are some useful tips. Among them, peer pressure is one of the most important. These ideas should help, but it may come down to the question of who is in charge.

Establish the helmet habit early when your children get their first bikes. If they learn to wear helmets whenever they ride it will become a habit for a lifetime. If possible, start them off with helmets while they are still on tricycles to establish the link between wheeled vehicles, pavement and helmets. It's never too late, however, to get your children into helmets.

Wear one yourself. Provide a role model for your kids; they learn best by observing you.

Encourage their friends to wear helmets. Peer pressure can be used in a positive way if several families in the neighborhood start making helmet use a regular habit at the same time. If no other kid in your neighborhood uses a helmet, your job will be a lot harder.

Talk to them about why you want them to protect their heads. Let them know:

- Their bikes are not toys, but their first vehicles;
- You love them and value them and their intelligence.
- They can hurt their heads permanently or even die from a head injury

Give your child a short course in bike safety, using a guide like Teaching Your Child to Ride A Bicycle. Placing the helmet in the context of a safety program shows that it is not just an arbitrary rule and helps underscore why you are requiring it. It is not enough to put a helmet on the child and send them off without some basic safety instruction.

Point out when watching sports events how many professional athletes use helmets. Football and hockey players, baseball batters and race car drivers wear them.

Take your child to a bicycle race. Bicycle racers are required to use helmets in the US, the Tour de France and almost everywhere. They will see--usually close up--really cool riders, competing in a hotly contested event, all of them using helmets.

Reward your kids for wearing helmets. Praise them; give them a special treat or privilege when they wear them without having to be told to.

Don't let them ride their bikes unless they wear their helmets. Be consistent. If you allow your children to ride occasionally without helmets, they will not believe your messages about the importance of wearing them. Tell them they have to find another way to play, or must walk or take a bus to get somewhere if they don't want to use their helmet.

Plan bicycle outings together when all family members wear their helmets. Ride with a local bike club if you can, where all members will probably be wearing helmets and many of them, like the racers, are accomplished riders.

Remember: Crashes causing head injuries can occur on sidewalks, driveways, bike paths, and parks as well as streets. You and your children cannot predict when a situation will occur that will end in a fall. It is important to wear a helmet whenever riding even if it's just down the street or on a bike trail.

Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, 2006

The Safety Rules Can Protect Your Child

1. Never ride out into a street without stopping first.

Nearly a third of car-bike crashes involving a young child occur when the child rides down a driveway or from a sidewalk into the street and in front of a car. Kids must learn to stop, look left, look right, look left again and listen to be sure no cars are coming before entering a street. Look left that second time because cars coming from the left are on the child's side of the street and are closer. Use your driveway or sidewalk to demonstrate this way to enter a street. Have the child practice the entry, looking left, looking right and looking left again. Make sure that they understand that because they see a car does not mean the driver sees them. They must always assume that the driver has not.

2. Obey stop signs.

Nearly a third of the car-bike crashes with a young child occur when the child rides through a stop sign or red light into crossing traffic. Kids must learn to stop, look left, look right, then look left again at all stop signs, stop lights and intersections before crossing. Make sure they know the basics about stop signs and stop lights, and that they must always ride on the right, with traffic. Then take your child to a controlled intersection and practice crossing safely. Explain that when riding in a group, *each bicyclist* must stop and make sure it is clear before crossing. Teach young children to walk their bikes through busy intersections. Remind them to obey traffic signals even if no one appears to be coming. While you are at it, explain one-way streets to them too.

3. Check behind before turning, swerving, or changing lanes.

Nearly a third of the car-bike crashes involving children occur when a child turns suddenly into the path of a car. Kids must learn to look behind them before swerving, turning or changing lanes. The best place to practice this is in a quiet parking lot or playground. Stand behind them while they ride along a straight painted line. Hold up numbered cards and have them practice looking back over their shoulder and telling you the number on the card without swerving off the painted line. Children should not ride their bikes on the street alone until they can master this skill. If they can handle it, teach them signaling too, but signaling is too complicated a skill for younger kids.

4. Always ride on the right.

Wrong-way riding is another cause of bike crashes on one-way or two-way streets. Car drivers do not look for bicycles coming down the wrong side of the street at intersections or driveways. The closing speed of car and bike is higher if the bike is riding at the car. Riding with traffic is the safer way.

5. Never follow another rider without applying the rules.

Many fatalities occur when one rider blindly follows another. Running stop signs or red lights, riding out of driveways or zipping across lanes all seem natural to the second child in line because they are more focused on following the first rider than on the traffic or the rules. This will not be an easy lesson to absorb!

Before you get on your bike, put on a helmet!

Every year about 800 people die in the U.S. from bicycle crashes. Most of them die from head injuries. Bike helmets can prevent about 85% of that. So you don't want your child riding a bike without a helmet, even on your block, the sidewalk or a bike trail. The fall is from the same distance above the pavement, wherever it happens.

Now on to the fun on the back panel!

Here are the steps:

- **First, teach them the five rules to avoid fatal crashes!**
- **Then teach them to wear a helmet,**
- **Then, help them learn to balance and ride according to the rules.**

Some parents begin and end with teaching balance. But step one is the most important: teaching your child how to avoid the situations that result in hundreds of dead children every year. And you probably are aware already that a helmet is essential when they make a mistake. Teaching them to balance is the easiest part for most kids. Then you have to practice the five basic safety rules in actual riding. It can take you an extra couple of hours, but the result is well worth the effort!

Warning: Children must remove helmets before climbing on playground equipment or trees, where a helmet can snag and choke them.

The Fun Part: Time to Ride

Gear: Start with a helmet, gloves to protect the skin on their hands and perhaps even skaters' knee and elbow pads for the first rides. Adjust the bicycle for them and be sure they can reach pedals, bars and brakes comfortably.

Brakes first! Show your kid how to stop the bike. Hold them up and gently move them forward as they use the brakes to stop until you are sure they know how.

Balance: Run alongside the bike, holding it up by the seat with one hand on the handlebars to show how you turn them to keep the bike upright.

Riding: Nobody learns without practice. Riding with your child is probably the best way to practice the rules. Go over the rules, then ride, stopping occasionally to review what they have just done and praise their good performance Notice that if they are behind you, your rule about not following automatically will be severely challenged, even if you ride through a red light or directly into the path of a car! As with almost any other skill, practice is required to ingrain techniques. More than one session will be needed. But the result is worth your time.

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Teaching Your Child to Ride a Bicycle

More than wearing a helmet,
More than just balance,
Teaching your child survival rules!

The Six Minute Guide

Need One?

What did you expect us to say? You need your brain to work so you can skateboard, and don't just lie in bed and slobber the rest of your life. You don't know how hard pavement is until your head really hits it. If you do a wrist or an arm or a collarbone it heals, but the brain is different. Besides that, helmets may be the law in your area, and you can't use most skate parks without one.

What to Look For

A skateboard helmet softens the impact when the foam inside crushes or slowly deforms.

The hard shell on board helmets holds up under multi impacts. Bike helmets use thin plastic that breaks immediately the first time you hit hard.

The best interior foam for skateboard is probably Expanded PolyPropylene (EPP). It looks like bike helmet foam, but feels a little bit rubbery. Unlike bike helmet EPS foam, EPP recovers and is good for the next hit.

The helmet must stay on your head. It's not a hat, just sitting there. It will fly off while you are flying through the air. So it needs a strong strap and an equally strong buckle. And you need to remember to fasten it.

Skateboard helmets are usually black. If you want to be seen on the street, get a bright color. Most boarders don't.

Standards

A sticker inside the helmet tells what standard it meets. True skateboard helmets meet ASTM F1492. Some "skate-style" helmets only meet the CPSC bicycle helmet standard. Those are bike helmets, not skateboard helmets, even if there is a skateboard on the box.

How to Buy

Some of the best skateboard helmets are "dual-certified" to both the ASTM and CPSC standards. That includes Bell Faction, Mirra, Rage and Wicked, Free Agent, Kryptonics Signature, Limited and Kore Series, Pro-Tec Classic, Arc Freestyle Signature and B-2, and the W Helmets Ripper 2 in small and medium sizes only.

Check our Dual Certified Helmets page at http://www.helmets.org/dualcert.htm for the latest list. Those helmets are designed for skateboarding *and* bicycling.

The Two Minute Summary

- **You always need a helmet when you board. You will crash eventually.**
- **Even a low-speed fall can scramble your brains.**
- **Laws in some states and skateboard parks require helmets.**
- **Buy a skateboard helmet for skateboarding, not a bicycle helmet. You will get better coverage and protection built for skateboarding.**
- **Skateboard helmets should meet the ASTM F1492 skateboard helmet standard.**

If you have 6 more minutes, read on!

When to Replace a Helmet?

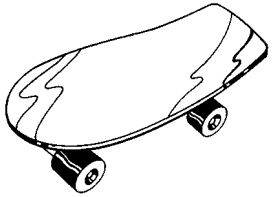
If you really have a skateboard helmet that meets the ASTM F1492 standard you don't need to replace it every time you crash, but someday you will. Replace the buckle if it cracks or a piece breaks off.

Skate Helmets for Biking?

Do not use a skate helmet for bicycling unless it has a CPSC bicycle helmet standard sticker inside!

Consumer Reports Article

Consumer Reports published an article in July 2004 rating a few skate helmets. You can read the article at your local library or buy it at www.consumer.org



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Skateboard Helmets

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