



PREVENTING INJURIES TO CHILDREN RIDING BICYCLES

The single most effective safety device available to reduce head injury and death from bicycle crashes is a helmet.

- Make it a rule — every time you or your child ride a bike, you must wear a bicycle helmet that meets or exceeds the safety standards developed by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Helmet fit is important. The helmet should be comfortable and snug, but not too tight. It should sit centered on top of your head in a level position, and it should not rock forward and backward or side to side. The helmet straps must always be buckled snugly against your chin.
- If your child is reluctant to wear a helmet, try letting him or her choose his own.

Proper bicycle fit and maintenance are also important for safety.

- Ensure proper bike fit by bringing the child along when shopping for a bike. Buy a bicycle that is the right size for the child, not one he will grow into. When sitting on the seat, the child's feet should touch the ground.
- Make sure the reflectors are secure, the brakes work properly, gears shift smoothly and tires are tightly secured and properly inflated.

Always model and teach proper bicyclist behavior. Learn the rules of the road, and obey all traffic laws.

- Ride on the right side of the road, with traffic, not against. Stay as far to the right as possible.
- Use appropriate hand signals.
- Respect traffic signals, stopping at all stop signs and stop lights.
- Stop and look left, right and left again before entering a street or crossing an intersection. Look back and yield to traffic coming from behind before turning left.

Adult supervision of child cyclists is essential until you are sure a child has good traffic skills and judgment.

- Cycling should be restricted to sidewalks and paths until a child is age 10.
- Children should be able to demonstrate riding competence and knowledge of the rules of the road before they cycle with traffic.

Children should not ride a bicycle when it's dark, in the fog or in other low-visibility conditions.

- If riding at dusk, dawn or in the evening is unavoidable, use a light on the bike and make sure it has reflectors as well.
- Wear clothes and accessories that incorporate retroreflective materials to improve your visibility to motorists.

