



# Bike Helmets Help Keep Kids Safe

All bike riders are at risk for accidents. Bike accidents cause a half million injuries each year. Most of these accidents involve children age 5 – 14. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says bike helmets could save 450 children each year.

Head injuries are the most common bike injury. Most are the result of a fall. Even relatively minor head injuries can cause problems for years. Kids could suffer balance problems, personality changes, learning delays and headaches.

Four factors commonly lead to bike injuries:

1. Not wearing a helmet,
2. Riding on a borrowed bike,
3. Riding with more than 1 child on a bike, and
4. Not being able to see properly.

Wearing a bike helmet could lessen or avoid eighty-five percent of head injuries.

Bike helmets must pass safety tests and fit properly.

- Take your child shopping for a helmet. Let him choose the color and style. However, make sure the helmet is smooth and round. Do not choose helmets with fins or tails. A smooth helmet will *slide* across pavement if a child falls.

- Choose a helmet tested and approved by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The CPSC sticker or label is inside the bike helmet. Not all helmets meet safety standards.
- Try on helmets. Make sure it is the correct size. Most helmets come with pads. These pads help insure a snug fit.
- *Insist that your child wear a bike helmet while biking.* Have a “No helmet, no bike ride” rule.
- Be a good role model. Wear a helmet when you bike.
- Replace a bike helmet after an accident. Impact can damage the foam inside the helmet and reduce the helmet’s safety features.

Biking helmets are only for biking. It is dangerous for a child to wear the helmet on a playground. When your child gets off her bike, make sure she takes off her helmet.

Biking is a fun family sport. Make sure it is also a safe one.

## How to Properly Fit a Bike Helmet

1. Place the helmet on your child’s head. It should sit straight – not at an angle or tilted. The front should sit low on the forehead - one or two fingers above the eyebrow.
2. The helmet should be snug all the way around your child’s head. It should not slide from front to back or from side to side. Use fit pads inside the helmet to adjust the size.
3. All straps should be snug. Side straps should form a V-shape just below the ear lobe. No more than 1 or 2 fingers should fit under the chin strap.
4. When your child opens her mouth, the helmet should pull down on her head.
5. You will need to take off the helmet to make pad and strap adjustments.

As your child grows, you may need to adjust the inner fit pads. Most helmets come with different sized pads. Save these pads for future fitting.

*Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John’s Children’s Hospital to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.*



Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889  
10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
[www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

Revised 2017

