Easy Steps to Properly Fit a Bicycle Helmet

It's not enough to simply buy a bicycle helmet – it should be properly fitted, adjusted, and worn each time you ride.

The Proper Helmet Fit

Helmets come in various sizes, just like hats. Size can vary between manufacturers. For the most comprehensive list of helmet sizes according to manufacturers, go to the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute (BHSI) site: http://www.danscomp.com/products/charts/helmetchart.htm

To select and properly fit a bicycle helmet, follow the helmet fitting instructions in this flyer.

It may take some time to ensure a proper fit. It is easier if you have someone help you adjust the straps.

Step 1 Size:

Measure your head for approximate size. Try the helmet on to ensure it fits snuggly. While it is sitting flat on top of your head, make sure the helmet doesn't rock side to side. Sizing pads come with new helmets; use the pads to securely fit to your head. Mix or match the sizing pads for the greatest comfort. In your child's helmet, remove the padding when your child's head grows. If the helmet has a universal fit ring instead of sizing pads, adjust the ring size to fit the head.

Step 2 Position:

The helmet should sit level on your head and low on your forehead—one or two finger-widths above your eyebrow.

Step 3 Buckles:

Center the left buckle under the chin. On most helmets, the straps can be pulled from the back of the helmet to lengthen or shorten the chin straps. This task is easier if you take the helmet off to make these adjustments.

Step 4 Side Straps:

Adjust the slider on both straps to form a "V" shape under, and slightly in front of, the ears. Lock the slider if possible.

Step 5 Chin Strap:

Buckle your chin strap. Tighten the strap until it is snug, so that no more than one or two fingers fit under the strap.

Step 6 Final Fitting:

A. Does your helmet fit right? Open your mouth wide…big yawn! The helmet should pull down on the head. If not, refer back to step 5 and tighten the chin strap.

B. Does your helmet rock back more than two fingers above the eyebrows? If so, unbuckle, shorten the front strap by moving the slider forward. Buckle, retighten the chin strap, and test again.

C. Does your helmet rock forward into your eyes? If so, unbuckle, tighten the back strap by moving the slider back toward the ear. Buckle, retighten the chin strap, and test again.

D. Roll the rubber band down to the buckle. All four straps must go through the rubber band and be close to the buckle to prevent the buckle from slipping.

www.nhtsa.gov
NHTSA

When to Replace a Helmet.

Replace any helmet that has been involved in a crash, or is damaged.

The Helmet Should Fit Now.

Buy a helmet that fits your head now, not a helmet to "grow into."

Replace any helmet that has been outgrown.

The Helmet Should Be Comfortable.

If it feels small, put in the thinner sizing pads or purchase a larger helmet. Ideally, select a helmet brand and size that fits well prior to any adjustments. If you buy a helmet that you find comfortable and attractive, you are more likely to wear it.

The Helmet Must Cover Your Forehead.

The Chin Strap Must Be Tight and Properly Adjusted.

The Helmet Should Not Rock Forward or Backward on Your Head.

If it does, see step 6.

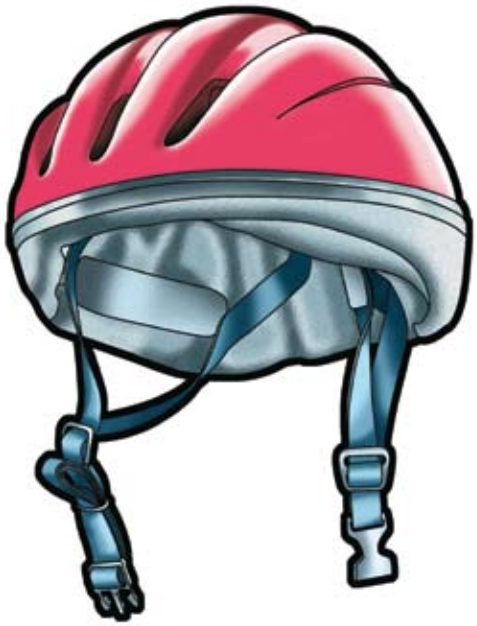
A bicycle helmet can protect your head and brain ONLY if you wear it each time you ride!

Helmet Laws

Many States and local jurisdictions have bicycle helmet laws; please refer to your State or local jurisdiction. To find this information go to **www.helmets.org/mandator.htm**

A bicycle crash can happen at any time. A properly fitted bicycle helmet reduces the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88 percent.

More children age 5 to 14 go to hospital emergency rooms for injuries associated with bicycles than with any other sport. Many of these injuries involve the head. Helmet laws ensure the safety of our children.



Model Safe Behavior

Everyone — adult and child — should wear bicycle helmets each time they ride. Helmets are the single most effective way to prevent head injuries resulting from bicycle crashes. Wearing a helmet each ride can encourage the same smart behavior in others.

Helmet Certification

Buy a new helmet that has been tested and meets the uniform safety standard issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC); use an old helmet only if it has a seal from one or more of the voluntary bicycle helmet standards, such as ASTM, Snell, or ANSI. Look for the certification seal labeled on the helmet.

DOT HS 810 600
April 2006

For more information on bicycle safety, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Web site at: www.nhtsa.dot.gov

www.nhtsa.gov
NHTSA