

USING your HEAD!

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Bicycling remains one of the most popular recreational sports among children in the United States. It is also the leading cause of recreational sports injuries treated in emergency departments.

The bike helmet is very effective and can prevent the occurrence of up to 88 percent of serious brain injuries. Despite this, most children do not wear a helmet every time they ride a bike, and adolescents are particularly resistant to using helmets.

Teaching a child early is the best approach. It's like a seat belt habit – if they learn to wear helmets at a young age, it becomes a habit for life.

Teach Kids Safety First

Most people don't realize that hundreds of thousands of children are seriously injured every year to bicycle falls. Even worse, hundreds of children die from them each year. Don't count on luck to protect your child!

Here are some tips to help keep your kids safe:

- Babies younger than 1 year have relatively weak neck structure, so neither helmets nor bike traveling is recommended for them.
- Have helmets professionally fitted. For the best protection, helmets should always sit on top of the head.
- Your child's helmet should fit for several years because most models have removable fitting pads that can be replaced with thinner ones as your child's head grows.
- If a helmet has been through a serious fall or accident, or if you are uncertain whether the helmet is still usable, throw it away.
- Have your child wear a helmet while learning to ride a tricycle and if he or she is a passenger on the back of an adult's bike.
- Wear a helmet yourself. The most important factor that will influence your child to wear a helmet is to ride with an adult who wears a helmet.

CHOOSING A HELMET

Helmets that meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) requirements are recommended. These helmets are available at bicycle shops and at some department stores in adult, toddler and children's styles and sizes.

All helmets manufactured or imported for use after March 1999 must comply with a mandatory safety standard issued by the CPSC. Older helmets certified by the American Society for Testing and Materials or Snell Memorial Foundation may also be used.