



SMART STEPS TO BICYCLE SAFETY



More childhood injuries are associated with bicycles than any other consumer product except the automobile. You can help keep your kids safe by following these important guidelines.

Dress safely

- Maintain a "no helmet, no ride" policy. Helmets reduce the risk of head and brain injury by 85%. If you wear a helmet, chances are your kids will too.
- Buy a helmet that meets U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, ANSI, ASTM, or Snell B90 standards. Look for the sticker! Always replace a helmet that was in a crash.
- The helmet should cover the child's forehead and fit snugly in a level position. Make sure the helmet stays in place when the child shakes his/her head. If not, add more padding and/or adjust the straps. You should be able to fit one finger between the child's chin and the chin strap.
- Bicyclists need to wear white or bright clothing so they can be seen. Avoid loose clothes, drawstrings, and backpacks with straps that can get caught in the bike. Wear reflective materials at dawn, dusk, and in bad weather.
- Do not allow headphones.

Ride in safe places

- Find or create a safe place for children to ride and practice their bicycle skills. The ideal learning location is a wide, flat surface with no traffic or debris.
- Sidewalk riding is safe only when a grown-up is next to the child and helps him/her recognize and stop for hazards—cars backing out of driveways, pedestrians, shrubs or fences that obscure vision, debris, and uneven or broken surfaces.
- Children under age 10 should ride only with adult supervision.

Maintain safe bikes

- Fit the bicycle to the child. It is tempting to buy a bike the child can grow into, but bikes that don't fit are difficult to control and increase the risk of a crash.
- Before each ride, inspect the child's bike—is there enough air in the tires? Do the brakes work? Is the seat tight and straight? Does anything rattle? Keep the bike clean.

Learn safe riding

- Bicyclists cause crashes when they dart out of driveways or alleys, go off curbs or through stop signs, without slowing, stopping, or looking for traffic. Children need to stop and look left, right, and left again before crossing or entering a path, driveway, sidewalk, or road, and continue looking as they cross.
- Teach children to obey all traffic signs and signals.
- At busy intersections, children should get off their bikes and walk them across the road.
- Children need to ride on the right, with traffic. Teach them to be predictable: ride in a straight line and use hand signals. When changing lanes, they should always look behind them and yield to oncoming traffic. Children should not ride at night.

*For more information,
contact the
I'm Safe! Network at
www.imsafe.com*



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