

**Bike Helmets**

**Child Care/Health Promotion**  
Si usted desea esta información en español,  
por favor pidasela a su enfermero o doctor.

#175

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Bike Helmets

**Children's heads need protection every time they ride.**

Bike riding is fun, but it can also hurt. In the United States, more children die from bike accidents than from poisoning, falls and guns combined. Almost 600 children die every year from bike accidents. But parents can help keep children safe.

Most bike accident deaths come from head and neck injuries. Head injuries can also cause serious problems like seizures, paralysis, trouble thinking, moving and speaking. The effects of one head injury can last a lifetime. A child who wears a bike helmet has a much smaller chance of a head injury. Helmets lower the risk by 85%.



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## What kind of bike helmet should my child wear?

Your child should wear a bike helmet that has been tested and approved. The label on the box or on the helmet will say:

ANSI (American Standards Institute) or  
SNELL (The Snell Memorial Foundation) or  
ASTM Seal of Safety.

## How much does a bicycle helmet cost?

Approved bike helmets cost from \$10.00 to \$50.00. You can buy them at bicycle stores, toy stores or department stores that sell bicycles.

## When should my child wear the helmet?

Your child should wear a helmet every time he or she is riding a bicycle or using in-line skates. Even if it is a short trip. When you buy your child that first tricycle, buy a helmet, too. Your child will learn early that riding and helmets go together.



The front of the helmet needs to protect the forehead.

## Is there a special way to wear the helmet?

The front of the helmet needs to protect the forehead. Do not push the helmet back on the head.



When the straps are buckled, the helmet should not be loose or wobbly.

Keep the straps snug and close the buckles. If the helmet falls off, it won't protect your child's head.

The helmet needs to fit your child's head. Helmets come with foam pads that help adjust the fit. When the straps are buckled, the helmet should not be loose or wobbly. The instructions will show you how to adjust the fit.

If your child has an accident while wearing the helmet, send the helmet back to the manufacturer to be inspected for cracks. The child should not wear it again until it is inspected.

# OK, if I buy a helmet, how do I get my child to wear it?

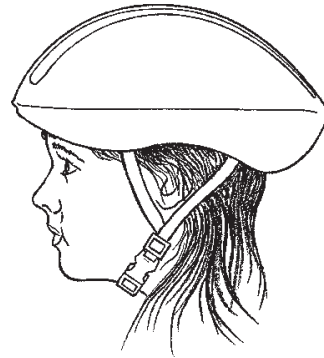
- Explain why your child needs to wear a helmet. It keeps the brain safe, and brains control everything we do!

- Let your child go with you to pick out the helmet. Your child can choose the color and style. You make sure the helmet is tested and approved, and is the right size.

- Let your child decorate the helmet with stickers or paint. Some helmets even come with stickers.

- Expect your child to wear the helmet every time he or she gets on the bicycle. Tell your child not to get on the bicycle without wearing the helmet.

- If you see your child riding without a helmet, immediately tell your child to get off the bike. Take the bike away and make your child walk. Do not let your child ride again until he or she agrees to wear the helmet.



Make the rule and keep it:  
no helmet,  
no bicycle riding.

- Children often feel better about wearing their helmets after they have been in a bike safety program. These may be offered by your child's school, your health insurance plan, your police department or your parks and recreation department. You can find their phone numbers in your telephone book. Call and ask for the date and place of the next bike safety program.

- Your child may argue with you to try to get out of wearing the helmet. Explain what a helmet does and why it is needed. But don't get involved in long arguments, trying to convince your child to wear it. **Just make the rule and keep it: no helmet, no bicycle riding.**

# What if my child says it's not cool to wear a helmet?

Ask your child if football players, motorcycle policemen, firemen, construction workers, hockey players, professional bike racers and race car drivers are cool. They all wear helmets.

When you see people wearing helmets, point them out to your child. Posters of race car drivers. Players in football games. Police officers on bicycles. Children on tricycles.

## Here are some things children may say when told to wear a helmet, and what you might say in response:

"I'm careful. I don't need a helmet."

Even if you're careful, other people might not be. They're called accidents because you don't do them on purpose. You can't tell when they're going to happen.

"My friends think I'm a nerd when I wear a helmet."

Tell your friends, "At the speeds I travel, I need a helmet!" Your brain is the most important part of your body. It controls your thinking, speech and everything else. If you get hurt, you get benched like the pro sports players do, and that's not fun!

"I'm not going far."

Accidents can happen anywhere, anytime. Even in your own driveway.



Don't get pulled into arguments over wearing a helmet. Just make the rule and keep it: no helmet, no bicycle riding.

**"I don't have time to put on my helmet."**

Once the helmet is adjusted, it only takes half-a-minute to put it on. A head injury lasts forever.

**"It's too hot!"**

Yes, it is hot. We live in Arizona. Show your child the air vents in the helmet.

Remind your child to drink plenty of fluids, especially in the summer.

Don't get pulled into arguments over wearing a helmet. Your child doesn't have to agree with you. Remember, you are the parent. **If your child chooses not to behave safely and doesn't wear a helmet when riding, take away the privilege of riding the bicycle.**

- Set a good example. Always wear your helmet when you ride a bicycle or motorcycle. It will protect your head, and show you mean what you say.

**Just make the rule and keep it: no helmet, no bicycle riding.**

**Children's heads need protection every time they ride.**

**Now that you've read this:**

- Tell your nurse or doctor: does your child have a bicycle helmet? If not, do you have a way to get a bicycle helmet for your child? (Check when done.)**
- Tell your nurse or doctor why it is important for your child to wear a bicycle helmet, and when your child should wear it. (Check when done.)**
- Tell your nurse or doctor what you will do to make sure your child wears a bicycle helmet every time.**



If you have any questions or concerns,  
 call your child's doctor or  call \_\_\_\_\_

If you want to know more about child health and illness,  
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital  
1919 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016  
602-546-1400  
[www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com](http://www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com)

**Disclaimer**

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Tuesday, May 31, 2005 • DRAFT to family review  
#175 • Written by Naomi Kennis, RN • Illustrated by Dennis Swain



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por favor pídasela a su enfermero o doctor.

Name of Health Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: 175  
For office use: Date returned: \_\_\_\_\_  db  nb

## Family Review of Handout

**Health care providers:** Please teach families with this handout.

**Families:** Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read?  Yes  No

easy to read?  Yes  No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read?  Yes  No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading  
this handout?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any  
questions about the subject?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes  No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

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**Thank you for helping us!**