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How to Choose a Bicycle Helmet for a Child

Helmet Standards

Only buy cycling helmets that meet one of the following standards:

- ANSI
- ASTM
- CPSC
- CSA
- Snell



Helmets certified only for cycling are not to be used for multiple impact activities such as ice skating.

Helmets certified only for cycling are meant to protect from a single impact and then need to be replaced.

Helmet Types

Approved helmets come in three types:

- **Thin Shell**
Has a thin layer of plastic over the foam liner and is lighter than a hard shell helmet.
- **Hard Shell**
Has a thick hard covering over the foam liner and may prevent a sharp object from puncturing the helmet.
- **Multi-purpose**
The standards for biking and in-line skating are identical, so a bike helmet can be used for both activities. Some helmets certified for multi-purpose use can be used for both bicycling and multiple impact activities such as skateboarding.

Replace a bicycle helmet when:

- it has been involved in a crash
- the lining is cracked
- it is 3-5 years old, due to wear and tear
- the buckle cracks or if any piece of it comes off; sometimes only the buckle will need to be replaced

Always wear an approved bicycle helmet.



Fit

Children are more likely to wear a helmet that they choose for themselves. Have the child try on several helmets to get the best fit.

To ensure a good fit:

- Place the helmet squarely on top of the head.
- Adjust the front of the helmet to sit 2 finger-widths above the eyebrows.
- Adjust the chin strap to fit only one finger between the chin and chin strap.
- Confirm that the helmet cannot come off the head when the chin strap is done up.
- The helmet should fit snugly on the head, with little movement from side to side or front to back.

To encourage proper helmet use:

- Start the helmet habit early. When a child begins to ride a tricycle, they should wear a helmet on every ride.
- Adjust helmets for proper fit as children grow. Helmets need to be replaced every 3-5 years, due to wear and tear.
- Show children that wearing other head gear such as ball caps or toques can get in the way of proper helmet fit.
- Discuss how a bicycle helmet can protect the brain.
- Be a role model in your community by wearing a helmet. People of all ages benefit from the protection of a helmet.
- Encourage others in your neighbourhood to wear a helmet that fits well.
- Provide reminders to wear a helmet every ride, every time.

The Proper Fit – 2V1 Rule



2 - The front of the helmet sits 2 finger-widths above the eyebrows.



V - The straps form a "V" around the ear.



1 - Only one finger fits between the chin and the chin strap.

For more information about helmets and other cycling-related topics, visit <https://skprevention.ca/safety/bike-and-wheel-safety/>.