

BIKE HELMETS: why they matter, and what you can do about it

Lots of kids don't wear bike helmets when they ride - the CDC reported in 2009 that 85 percent of high school students did not wear a helmet when they rode a bike.

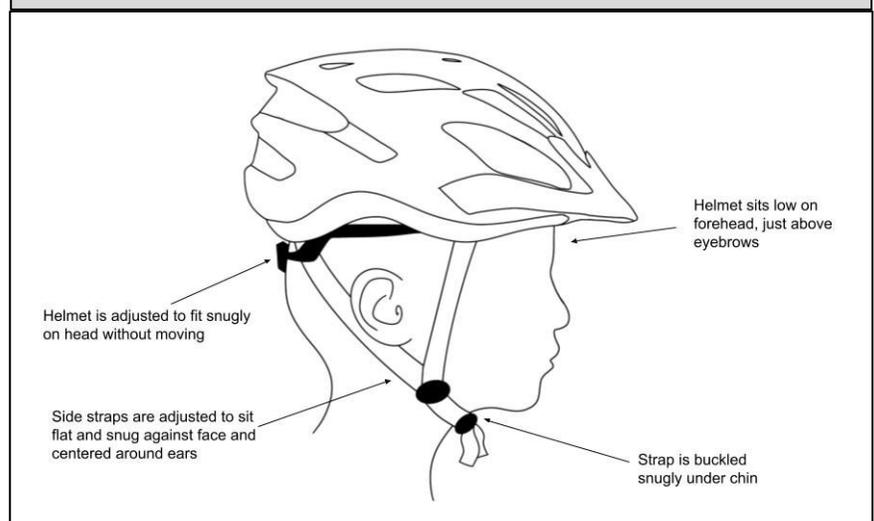
- In 2005, children under 15 accounted for 53 percent of bicycle injuries in emergency departments.
- Two out of three bike accidents involve children under 15; and kids ages 5-14 are hurt more than cyclists at any other age.
- Helmet use is lowest in kids ages 11-14, with only 11 percent of kids wearing a helmet when they ride.

There are lots of reasons you may not want to wear a helmet...	But it's the safest choice you can make!
Helmets can be uncomfortable	More often than not, an uncomfortable helmet is a helmet that doesn't fit properly. A correctly fitted helmet should be comfortable to wear.
Helmets don't look good, and students worry that they will be made fun of	It's true that many bike helmets are not the most fashionable, but it's super important to wear one! Acting as a model and always wearing a helmet can help encourage others to do the same.
Students believe that they are a good rider and will not fall off their bike, or are traveling in a more remote area with few cars or only on sidewalks and assume a helmet is not necessary.	Accidents happen to even the best cyclists, and much of the time, the concern isn't about the cyclist themselves but about other vehicles on the road like cars that aren't looking out for bikes.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Bike helmets should be replaced every 3-5 years as the foam breaks down, and immediately after a collision.
- Bike helmets save lives! Helmets protect the wearer from potentially severe head injury, which can easily be very damaging or even deadly.
- Testing by the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute (bhsi.org) found that inexpensive and higher end helmets offered very similar levels of protection from head injury.

Here's how to correctly wear a bike helmet - notice how the helmet sits low on the wearer's forehead and buckles snugly under the chin. A properly fitted helmet is the safest helmet!



Helmets may not look the coolest, but preventable brain damage or even death is way less cool.

Wearing a helmet and riding carefully - staying in marked bike lanes, signaling turns, and being predictable to cars and other vehicles - are the most important things you can do for safety on your bike rides.

WEAR A HELMET EVERY TIME YOU RIDE!