

BICYCLE SAFETY

Biking is a popular sport and provides opportunities for children to develop skills, get exercise and have fun. Bicycles are moving vehicles and injuries related to biking are common. The most serious injuries are to the head, and most are preventable. The following is a bicycle safety checklist:

- Buy a helmet that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards. All such helmets are labeled, and not all helmets meet these standards.
- Do not use helmets designed for other purposes. Use only a bike helmet.
- The helmet should squarely cover the top of the head and should not be tipped backward. The chinstrap must fit snugly, and the helmet must be the correct size. Use the removable pads to adjust the size to fit comfortably but tightly.
- Infants under one year should not ride on bicycles – their head control is not strong enough to protect their brains, even with a helmet. Never ride a bike with a baby in a backpack or a front pack.
- If your helmet has been hit hard in a serious fall, replace it or at least have it checked at a bike store or by a similar expert.
- Helmets must be worn EVERY TIME – in the driveway, on the sidewalk, in the neighborhood...**EVERY TIME!!!**
- Helmet use is required by NJ law for riders under 17.
- Get your child to wear a helmet by:
 - Starting early and insisting on a helmet with every ride, from tricycle to bicycle
 - Wear a helmet yourself.
 - Tell your child why he should wear a helmet: you love him and want him to be safe, and hitting his head could hurt or even kill him.
 - Reward your child for wearing a helmet.
 - Discipline your child for breaking safety rules.
- Be sure the bike is the right size for the child – the balls of the feet should touch the ground when your child is sitting on the seat.

- Young riders should have foot brakes because their coordination and strength are not good enough to rely on handbrakes.
- Always ride on the right side of the road, with traffic. Teach your child traffic safety rules right from the start.
- No child should ride a bike at night, even with reflectors.
- Most children can ride a two-wheel bike by age five or six, but don't push your child until he is ready.
- Under the age of eight, children should always be supervised by an adult and should not ride in the street.
- Keep your child's bike in good repair, checking tires, brakes, seat height and handlebar height regularly.