

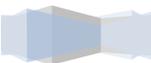


Transportation Safety

As the training wheels come off your child's bike, the risk for bike and wheeled-related injury may increase. To stay safe on wheeled toys and vehicles, big kids need to learn the rules of the road and practice safe behaviors. The most important rule, always wearing your helmet, can reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent. Every year, 350,000 children under the age of 15 go to hospital emergency rooms with bike-related injuries, 130,000 children suffer head injuries and an estimated 200 die. A bicycle helmet must fit properly to be safe. Here are some simple steps to making sure your child's helmet fits properly:

- If you haven't bought your child's helmet already, you might want to consider one with a rear stabilizer. A rear stabilizer cradles the back of the head and helps the helmet stay correctly positioned.
- Place the helmet level on your child's head, not tilted back at an angle. The helmet should fit snugly and shouldn't slide from side to side or front to back.
- If your child can put two fingers on both temples inside the helmet, it's too big. If you can pull or twist off your child's helmet when fastened, it's not properly secured.
- Tell your child to open his/her mouth widely and ask if they can feel the helmet push down onto the top of their head. If they can't, you need to readjust their helmet. If you can slip two fingers under the strap, it's too loose.
- Recheck the fit periodically. You should replace your child's bicycle helmet if it has been in an accident, if the buckle cracks or if a piece breaks off, if it doesn't have a U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, American Society for Testing and Materials, or Snell Memorial Foundation sticker. If it doesn't fit correctly or if it's more than two years old, it might be too small now.

Another important rule is wearing your seatbelt every time you ride in a car. Approximately 35,000 people die in motor vehicle crashes each year. About 50 percent (17,000) of these people could have been saved if they wore their safety belts. No matter how short the trip is, even if it's only around the corner, you still need to buckle up. This is important because if the car you're riding in is in an accident, the seatbelt restrains you, holding you back. Even if the car is moving slowly, you can still get thrown around if you're not wearing your seatbelt. Older cars might have two separate belts or no



shoulder belt, but just a lap belt. Whichever kind of seatbelt you come across, the directions are the same: buckle every belt. Do you find seatbelts uncomfortable? If you are wearing your seatbelt correctly, the lap belt or lower part of the belt should be sitting low and tight across the upper part of your hips. It should never go across the upper half of your belly. The shoulder part of the seatbelt should fit snugly across your chest and shoulder, not under your arm or across your neck or face. Sometimes seatbelts need to be adjusted to fit a kid correctly, always make sure your seatbelt fits right. Riding in a friend's or relative's car is no excuse to skip the seatbelt. Even if others don't wear their seatbelts, always wear yours and don't ever share a seatbelt with a friend as both children can get hurt. Don't be a statistic. Take the proper safety precautions to save your life.

For more information on transportation safety, contact Sharon Rateike, corporate wellness program coordinator at (920) 568-5475 or Sharon.Rateike@forthc.com.

