

## **GETTING YOUR CHILD TO WEAR BICYCLE HELMETS**

### **Establish the helmet habit early.**

Have your children wear helmets as soon as they start to ride tricycles and if they are a passenger on the back of an adult's bike. If they learn to wear helmets whenever they ride tricycles and bikes, it becomes a habit for a lifetime. It's never too late, however, to get your children into helmets. Allow your child to participate in choosing their helmet. They'll be able to let you know if it is comfortable. And if they like the design, they are more likely to wear it.

### **Wear a helmet yourself.**

Children learn best by observing you. Whenever you ride your bike, put on your helmet. Plan bicycle outings during which all family members wear their helmets to further reinforce the message. The most important factor influencing children to wear helmets is riding with an adult who wears a helmet.

### **Talk to your children about why you want them to protect their heads.**

There are many things you can tell your children to convince them of the importance of helmet use.

1. Bikes are vehicles, not toys.
2. You love and value them and their intelligence, and need to protect them.
3. They can permanently hurt their brains or even die of head injuries.

Most professional athletes use helmets when participating in sports. Bicycle racers are now required to use them when racing in the United States and in the Olympics.

### **Reward your kids for wearing helmets.**

Praise them; give them special treats or privileges when they wear their helmets without having to be told to.

### **Don't let children ride their bikes unless they wear their helmets.**

Be consistent. If you allow your children to ride occasionally without their helmets, they won't believe that helmet use really is important. Tell your children they have to find another way to get where they are going if they don't want to use their helmets.

### **Encourage your children's friends to wear helmets.**

Peer pressure can be used in a positive way if several families in the neighborhood start making helmet use a regular habit at the same time.

### **How should a helmet fit?**

A helmet should be worn squarely on top of the head, covering the top of the forehead. If it is tipped back, it will not protect the forehead. The helmet fits well if it doesn't move around on the head or slide down over the wearer's eyes when pushed or pulled. The chin strap should be adjusted to fit snugly.

**REMEMBER: Head injuries can occur on sidewalks, on driveways, on bike paths, and in parks as well as on streets. You cannot predict when a fall from a bike will occur. It's important to wear a helmet on every ride.**

**Dear Parent:**

Your child is old enough to start learning how to prevent injuries. Be a good example -- wear your helmet!

**It takes time to form a safety habit Remind each other about these safety messages. Make safety a big part of your lives**