

Bicycle Safety

Each year 530 children present at Princess Margaret hospital as a result of Bicycle injuries. The majority of these injuries occur on public roads. Most cycling injuries don't involve another vehicle, but occur when children fall off their bike after crashing into a pole, curb or fence.

Riding The Bike

- Children should obey the rules of the road and know what each traffic sign means.
- Children should never make a turn without looking behind them. Teach them to make a shoulder check before they signal and turn.
- Children should avoid riding on busy streets and riding at night
- If there is traffic, a child should stop by the side of the road and wait for a gap before turning
- For young cyclists, a footpath or shared path is the best place to cycle, unless a *no bicycles* sign is on display. The Road Traffic code 2000 allows children under 12 to ride on footpaths, but remember that driveways are dangerous.
- Children on bicycles should always give way pedestrians
- Help children understand when it is safe to cross the road
- Teach children to walk their bikes when crossing the street, crosswalk or railway crossings

The Bike

Make sure the bike fits: A bike that is too big or small is a safety hazard. How to check: have your child sit on his/her bike; at least the toes should touch the ground on both sides.

Do equipment spot checks: Parents should ensure their child's bicycle is equipped with safety devices such as lights (AS3562), reflectors (AS2142) and a bell or horn. Helmets should be approved for safety with an Australian Standards (AS2063) certification.

Be a role model: Set a good example when cycling with your children and wear a helmet too.

Make bikes Safer: Buy safe bicycles, with spoke guards & chain guards; Ensure a bike lamp is used at dusk or at night; Fit safety devices to bicycles such as reflectors and safety flags.

Bicycle Safety Checklist

1. **BRAKES:** ensure brake blocks are not worn down and are fitted correctly.
2. **CHAIN:** should be frequently oiled and not be too loose
3. **TYRES:** look for bald spots, bulges and cuts. Should not "squash" when firmly squeezed
4. **PEDALS:** must spin freely
5. **BELL or HORN:** should be loud enough for others to hear
6. **REFLECTORS and LIGHTS:** must be secure, properly aligned, clean and working.
7. **SEAT:** the height of the seat should be correctly adjusted so that the rider can sit on the seat with their toes able to reach the ground.

Tips For Safe Kids

Ensure Supervised Riding: Children under age ten should cycle with responsible adults. Most children in that age group do not have the skills to cycle safely without supervision & on road.

Learn the rules of the Road: Make sure children are taught the rules of the road for safe cycling practices before they are allowed to ride by themselves.

Know the dangers of the driveway: Children should know the driveway is dangerous and can pose a safety risk. They should always stop before entering the road, scan by looking in all directions, listen & think about if it is safe to cross the road.

Do not encourage children to ride their bikes in the driveway.



Wear a helmet: Current WA legislation states that everyone must wear an approved cycling helmet that meets Australian Standards (AS2063) and fits the child's head correctly at all times when cycling. Parents should set a good example by wearing bike helmets.

Bicycle Helmets Save Lives

Head injuries are the main cause of death and disability to cyclists. Bike helmets help reduce injury. After the introduction of mandatory helmet wearing for cyclists, there was a 40% reduction in head injuries to cyclists.

MOST CYCLING CRASHES USUALLY DON'T INVOLVE ANOTHER VEHICLE.

- The rider simply loses control of the bike. This happens to even the most experienced riders.



RURAL CHILDREN FACE THE SAME RISKS AS CITY CHILDREN.

- Many people think the country is a safer place for children to ride their bikes. But country kids are just as likely to lose control of their bikes.
- Country riders also have to deal with a range of road conditions such as gravel, potholes, slippery surfaces etc. Traffic is also permitted to travel at greater speeds in some country areas.

Choosing a Helmet

- Involve the rider in buying the helmet. Make sure he/she is happy with the appearance.
- Try it on for comfort and fit. Head size in centimetres and helmet size in centimetres may be different shapes. Not every helmet will fit snugly.
- Test the fit. Adjust the straps and do it up. It should sit straight on the head. Place your palm under the front of the helmet and push up and back. The helmet should not move.
- Don't buy a helmet that is too big so the child can grow into it. It will be too big to protect the child now.
- Child helmets are vital for children up to age five or six. After that, their head is almost adult size and they should be able to wear adult helmets.
- The helmet should feel comfortable and have a good airflow, particularly if you live in a warm climate.

- Look for an Australian Standards sticker. These helmets have been tested and approved (AS2063).
- Second-hand helmets may not be a bargain. It can be difficult to see damage to the foam lining. A damaged helmet will not protect the rider. With second-hand helmets you have little choice for comfort and fit.

Other Ways to Protect Cyclists



- Make sure the bike is in good condition and has red rear reflector, wheel and pedal reflectors for night riding.
- Cyclists should wear bright coloured clothing or use a visibility vest so they stand out and are easy to see.
- Riders under ten years old should not ride on the road unless they are accompanied by an adult.



Every child needs a helmet even if they are infant passengers; you are not riding on the road; or they are being supervised by an adult.

Kidsafe WA © 2012

Excerpts may be copied for educational purposes. Written permission is required to copy this fact sheet in its entirety.

For more information

☎ (08) 9340 8509

Child Safety Information Line

☎ 1800 802 244

Poisons Information Centre

☎ 13 11 26