

# Bike Helmets

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During the summer months, many people enjoy the outdoors by going on bicycle rides. As another school year approaches, many children will be riding to school each day. Whether you are an experienced bike rider or a beginner, wearing a bicycle helmet can help prevent serious injury if an accident occurs.

It has been reported that there are over 800 deaths each year as a result of bike crashes, and 75% of these deaths are the result of head injuries. In 1989, The New England Journal of Medicine published a research study on the effectiveness of bicycle helmets. The study reported that bicycle riders who wore helmets had an 88% reduced risk of brain injury, and an 85% reduction in the risk of head injury.

Since the use of a bike helmet can reduce the odds for a potentially serious injury, here are a few tips for selecting and fitting a bike helmet.

- When selecting a helmet, check for a CPSC sticker in the helmet. Since 1999, all bicycle helmets must meet a uniform safety standard issued by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Select a helmet that fits comfortably snug, but not tight. It should be touching all around your head without any gaps.
- Helmets should fit level on your forehead and not be tilted back. Make sure the helmet does not obstruct your visual field.
- The chinstrap should fit securely. Make sure buckles stay fastened.
- Choose a helmet that is bright colored or white to allow other bikers or motorists to see you better. If riding at night, put reflective tape on your helmet.
- If you need assistance with selection or proper fitting of a bike helmet, you may want to go to a bicycle shop and ask for assistance.

Information for this article was obtained from the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute ([www.bhsi.org](http://www.bhsi.org)) and the South Dakota Department of Health web sites.