COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY ABOUT BICYCLE HELMETS AND SAFETY

WHY ARE BICYCLE HELMETS SO IMPORTANT?

Bicycle helmets can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85 percent. Most deaths related to bicycle falls and collisions involve head injuries. This means that wearing a helmet can save your life.

DO I REALLY NEED TO WEAR A BICYCLE HELMET?

Yes. Each year, bicycle-related deaths number about 900, and United States hospital emergency rooms treat more than 500,000 people for bicycle related injuries. More children, ages 5 to 14, go to United States hospital emergency rooms for injuries associated with bicycles than with any other sport. Many of these injuries involve the head. If you do not wear a bicycle helmet, you are risking your life.

In addition, many states and local jurisdictions have laws requiring bicycle helmet use. Check if you have a law in your area.

WHY DO WE NEED A NEW U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION (CPSC) BICYCLE HELMET SAFETY STANDARD?

The new standard ensures that bicycle helmets provide excellent head protection and that the chin straps are strong enough to keep a helmet on the head and in place during a fall or collision.

WILL BICYCLE HELMETS MEETING CPSC'S BICYCLE HELMET SAFETY STANDARD PROTECT YOUNG CHILDREN?

Young children on bicycles suffer a higher proportion of head injuries than older bicyclists. Under CPSC's new standard, bicycle helmets for children ages 1 to 5 cover a larger portion of the head than helmets for older persons, thus providing additional protection.

All young children should wear a bicycle helmet, whether they are riding bicycles, tricycles, or are passengers on a parent's bicycle. Never carry a child under age 1 on your bicycle.

[NEW HELMET FOR AGES 1 TO 5]

SHOULD I REPLACE MY CURRENT BICYCLE HELMET AND BUY A NEW ONE THAT MEETS THE CPSC BICYCLE HELMET SAFETY STANDARD?

If you have a bicycle helmet that meets one or more of the voluntary bicycle helmet standards like ASTM, Snell, or ANSI, you do not need to buy a new helmet. These bicycle helmets provide sufficient protection for the head.

When you need to replace a helmet because it is outgrown or damaged in a crash, buy a new helmet that meets the CPSC safety standard.

HOW CAN I TELL IF MY BICYCLE HELMET FITS PROPERLY?

The helmet should fit comfortable and securely. It should be worn so that it is level on the head (not tilted back on the crown or pulled low over the forehead). You should not be able to move the helmet in any direction, back-to-front or side-to-side. The chin strap should be securely fastened. If needed, the helmet's sizing pads can help improve the fit.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I HAVE TROUBLE FITTING THE BICYCLE HELMET?

Make sure you have the proper size helmet for your head. Try the sizing pads included in the helmet box. If you still have trouble, ask a knowledgeable salesperson to help you. Properly fitting a bicycle helmet takes time, but it is worth the effort. If your helmet does not fit properly, it will not protect your head if you have a fall or collision.

[CORRECT WAY TO WEAR YOUR HELMET]

[WRONG WAY TO WEAR YOUR HELMET]

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WILL BICYCLE HELMETS PROTECT ME WHEN PLAYING OTHER SPORTS?

Bicycle helmets offer head protection for sports like in-line skating and roller skating. In addition, wrist guards, knee pads, and elbow pads are recommended for these sports.

Those who skateboard or do more aggressive (trick or freestyle) skating may want to look for helmets sold especially for there activities that meet safety standards for these sports These helmets cover more of the head, especially in the back. Wrist guards, knee pads, and elbow pads will offer additional body protection.

For the first time ever, all bicycle helmets must meet a uniform mandatory safety standard issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). In the past, bicycle helmets have met one or more voluntary safety standards, but after March 1999, all bicycle helmets manufactured in or imported to the United States must comply with the new Federal Standard. Some manufactures are likely to offer helmets meeting the CPSC safety standard before the effective date. After March 1999, consumers need only to look for a label or sticker that says the helmet meets the CPSC safety standard. This label or sticker ensures that the helmet will provide a high degree of head protection when biking.

U.S. Department of Transportation

NHTSA
People Saving People
http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

CPSC Web site: http://www.cpsc.gov
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what's new about bicycle helmets?

NEW SAFETY STANDARDS FOR BETTER PROTECTION