Fitting A Bike Helmet

Position

Put the helmet on your head so it sits evenly between the ears and rests low on your forehead – it should only be about 1-2 finger widths above your eyebrow.

Pads

Put foam pads inside the helmet so it feels comfortable but really snug. Usually, the helmet includes more than one size of foam pads that can be velcroed inside the helmet for a better fit.

Straps

Tighten the chin strap as snugly as possible. Adjust the junction of front and back straps just under the ears and secure back strap without putting pressure on the front strap

If all of this sounds confusing, follow the simple 5 – Step Helmet Fit Test at right

A Good Helmet Fit is as important as wearing one…but it takes time. Allow as much as a half hour to get a proper helmet fit. If fitting your child, don't try to "rush" it as they are trying to go outside to ride. Do it while they're relaxed and you have plenty of time Then secure the adjustments so the helmet is ready for the next ride.

Five – Step Helmet Fit Test

	Step	Problem	Solution
1	With one hand, gently lift the front of the helmet up and back.	**Helmet moves back to uncover the forehead.**	Tighten front strap to junction. Also, adjust padding thickness and/or position, especially in back. Make sure chin strap is snug. If this doesn't work, the helmet may be to big.
2	With one hand, gently lift the back of the helmet up and forward.	**Helmet moves forward to cover the eyes.**	Tighten back strap. Make sure chin strap is snug. Also, adjust padding thickness and/or position, especially in front.
3	Put a hand on each side of the helmet and rock from side to side. Shake your head "no" as hard as possible.	**Helmet slips from side to side.**	Check padding on sides and make sure straps are evenly adjusted.
4	Open your mouth (lower jaw) as wide as possible without moving your head. The top of your helmet should pull down.	**Helmet does not pull down when opening your mouth.**	Tighten chin strap. Make sure the front and back strap junction is under each ear.
5	Check to see if the front edge of helmet covers your forehead. The front edge of the helmet should not be more than 1 to 2 finger-widths from your eyebrows.	**Helmet does not cover the forehead.**	Position helmet no more than 1 to 2 finger-widths above eyebrows. Tighten any loose straps. Make adjustments so the helmet stays over the forehead.

Have someone else test your helmet fit by doing the **5 – Step Test** outlined above. Hold your head still during the test. Your helmet should pass each of the 5 steps.

Buying a Bike Helmet

1. Buy a helmet that has been tested and meets the uniform safety standard issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), or one or more of the voluntary bicycle helmet standards like ASTM, Snell or ANSI. You can tell this by looking for a label or sticker that says the helmet meets the standard.

2. Select a brand and size that fits well prior to any adjustments. Adjustable sizing pads are often included to help ensure a better fit. Buy one that's comfortable and attractive. You'll be more likely to wear it.

3. Buy a helmet that fits your child now, not a helmet to "grow into."

4. Replace any helmet that has been involved in a crash!

FACT:

A bicycle helmet reduces the risk of serious head and brain injury by 85-88%

But it's not enough to simply buy and wear one **you need to make sure it fits properly.**

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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

Developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration – Region 10

Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center (HIPRC)

Snell Memorial Foundation – Seattle, WA

DOT HS 808 000
September 1998

Permission to reprint with credit is hereby granted.

10,000 copies of this brochure were printed by the South Dakota Department of Health at a cost of $.14 per copy.

3/99 MCH-001

YOUR BICYCLE HELMET

A CORRECT FIT