



BICYCLE SAFETY

Choosing the correct helmet and adjusting it to fit



Helmets are one of the most important pieces of safety equipment a child can wear.

When worn properly, a helmet reduces the impact of the head hitting the ground or an object, and the risk of brain injury by around 90%.

It is important for children to know that helmets must be worn when riding a bike or small wheeled devices, even when riding around home.

Choosing a helmet

Helmets should feel comfortable and have good airflow when worn. The helmet should display an Australian Standards sticker, to show that the helmet has been tested and approved (**AS/NZS 2063**).

Try to avoid buying second-hand helmets and replace your child's helmet every 3-5 years, if they have outgrown it, or if the helmet has sustained an impact.



Kidsafe services may differ in each State and Territory. Please contact your State or Territory office for more information and advice. All information provided is correct at time of publication



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STEP ONE - SIZE

Measure your child's head and try on the helmet. It should fit snugly, sit flat and not rock side to side. Use the helmet sizing pads to secure the helmet to your child's head, or adjust the universal fit ring to the right size.

Remember to buy a helmet that fits your child's head now - not one to 'grow into.'

STEP TWO - POSITION

The helmet should sit level and low on your child's forehead - one or two finger-widths above their eyebrow.

STEP THREE - BUCKLES

Centre the buckle under the chin. Straps can be pulled from the back of the helmet to lengthen or shorten the chin straps.

Hint: it's easier to make these adjustments when the helmet is off.

STEP FOUR - SIDE STRAPS

Adjust the slider on both straps to form a 'V' shape under, and slightly in front of, the ears.

STEP FIVE - CHIN STRAP

Buckle the chin strap. Tighten the strap until it is snug.

No more than one or two fingers should fit under the strap.

STEP SIX - FINAL FITTING

Does the helmet fit right? Tell your child to open their mouth wide...big yawn! The helmet should pull down on the head. If not, refer back to step 5 and tighten the chin strap.

Does the helmet rock back more than two fingers above the eyebrows? If so, unbuckle and shorten the front strap, moving the slider forward. Buckle, re-tighten the chin strap, and test again. If the helmet rocks forward into the eyes, unbuckle and tighten the back strap by moving the slider towards the ears. Buckle re-tighten the chin strap and test again.



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i Perform regular bike safety checks

1. **Brakes** - make sure brake blocks are not worn and are fitted and working properly.
2. **Chain** - the chain should be frequently oiled and properly fitted.
3. **Tyres** - look for bald spots, bulges and cuts. Make sure they are pumped up to the correct tyre pressure.
4. **Pedals** - pedals should spin freely.
5. **Bell or horn** - bells or horns should be loud enough for others to hear.
6. **Lights and reflectors** - make sure lights and reflectors are secure, properly aligned, clean and in good working order.
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.
8. **Handle bar grips** - handle bar ends must be covered with intact grips. This reduces the risk of your child being impaled onto the handle bar ends if they fall.



Make sure that the bike is the right size

A bike that is too big or too small is a safety hazard.

Get your child to sit on the bike; their toes should touch the ground on both sides.

Cycling tips on and around our roads

- ✔ Use protective equipment such as helmets, wrist, knee and elbow guards. These are designed to protect the most common points of contact when children fall.
- ✔ Wear items that increase visibility to other road users such as pedestrians and vehicles. This can include bright-coloured clothing, reflective tape, flashing lights, reflectors, and visibility flags.
- ✔ Children under 10 years of age should cycle with a responsible adult. Most children under 10 years of age do not have the skills to ride safely without supervision on the road.
- ✘ Do not allow children to ride on busy streets or to ride at night.
- ✔ 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.
- ✔ Know the dangers of the driveway - children should be taught that the driveway is dangerous and should not be encouraged to ride their bikes in the driveway. If riding on a footpath or road, riders should watch for cars turning into, or coming out of driveways.
- ✔ Keep young cyclists on a footpath or shared path, unless a no bicycles sign is on display. In most states/territories, the road rules allow children under 12 to ride on footpaths.



Cycling in rural areas

Many people think that rural areas are safer for children to ride their bikes. Children living in rural areas are just as likely to lose control of their bike or small wheeled device - and deal with a range of different road surfaces, such as dirt, gravel, pot holes, and slippery surfaces.

Vehicles are also permitted to travel at greater speeds on some open roads and visibility may be impacted by dust, trees and other obstructions, making it difficult to see children.

Kids' bike seats and trailers that attach to an adult's bike provide easy transportation of young children, while adults enjoy all the benefits of riding.

When is my child ready to ride as a passenger on a bicycle?

Your child's neck and back must be strong enough to support their head and the extra weight of a helmet while riding. They must also be able to cope with the additional forces experienced when speeding up, slowing down and bouncing over bumps or potholes. It is recommended not to take a child under 12 months on a bike or in a bike trailer.

By law, your child must wear a properly fitted helmet when on a bike seat or in a trailer. In the event of a crash, the helmet protects your child's head from impact with the ground, the bike, bike seat or trailer frame.

The helmet must not force the child into an uncomfortable position. If the helmet forces the child's head forward, they may be too young.



Tips for riding safe with children as passengers:

- ✔ Ensure the seat or trailer is securely fixed to the bike before putting the child in the seat. If you are unsure, get a bike shop to install the carrier.
- ✔ Make sure the bike is stable before putting the child in, or taking them out of a bike mounted child seat or trailer.
- ✘ Never leave a child unattended in a bicycle-mounted child seat.
- ✔ Make sure the child wears a properly fitting helmet and harness at all times.
- ✔ Ride conservatively to take account of the longer braking distances and reduced manoeuvrability due to the extra weight.
- ✔ Make sure you have full control of the bike and child before riding in public areas. Test ride before you take the bike into busy areas.
- ✘ Don't use a baby backpack or sling while riding your bike. These make you less stable and, if you crash, the child has much further to fall and you might fall on them.
- ✔ Always look for bike seats, carriers and helmets that meet Australian Standards.

