

Frequently Asked Questions

Helmets:

Q1: When should bicycle helmets be replaced?

- A:** A well cared for helmet lasts for years. It should be replaced if the rider crashes and hits the pavement, or cracks or obvious damage is seen.

Helmets consist of a foam core, usually white or black in color, and most have a thin plastic shell that covers the core. If you have a crash and your helmet takes an impact, the helmet should be replaced. An impact damages the helmet's foam core, meaning it may not protect you again.

Q2: Does the law here require helmets?

- A:** About half the States have laws requiring children to wear helmets when riding bikes. Some municipalities have helmet use laws. For the most recent listing of helmet use laws for States and municipalities go to the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute Web site: www.helmets.org.

Q3: Why do adults need to wear helmets? It's not the law and many didn't wear a helmet when they were kids.

- A:** Through research we now know bicyclists of all ages should wear bicycle helmets every ride; we never know when a crash will occur. While helmets don't prevent crashes, they are proven to be up to 85 percent effective in preventing head and brain injuries when crashes do happen. Wearing helmets save lives. Parents need to protect themselves and be good role models for their children.

Q4: Does it matter what kind of helmet a bicyclist uses?

- A:** YES – everyone should wear a helmet that meets the safety standard set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). There are, however, different helmets available for different activities. Each type of helmet is made to protect your head from the impacts common to a particular activity or sport. Ski, hockey or other sport helmets don't provide protection for the needs of a bicyclist as well as one designed specifically for the sport of bicycling. According to the CPSC you can wear a CPSC compliant bicycle helmet while bicycling, recreational roller or in-line skating, and riding a non-powered scooter. In considering a multi-use sport helmets, check the box or packaging to see if the helmet is listed as suitable for bicycling. While youth can wear a BMX or downhill helmet in lieu of a bicycle helmet, these helmets are heavier and not as ventilated. Those who enjoy low speed bicycling, recreational bicycling or bicycling for transportation will feel more comfortable in a bicycle helmet. Regardless of what helmet is chosen, check inside the helmet for the safety sticker saying it complies with the CPSC bicycle safety standards.

Q5: Can a skateboard helmet be used for bicycling?

- A:** Yes, skateboard helmets provide suitable covering of the head for the sport of bicycling, but look inside the helmet for a sticker that says the helmet meets the CPSC safety standards.

Q6: Is it okay to put stickers on a helmet?

- A:** Yes. In fact stickers are a great way for children to take greater ownership of helmets and make them their own. Personalizing the helmet might make it more likely a child will wear the helmet.

Q7: Should I let my child choose his own helmet as long as it fits?

A: Absolutely. If it looks cool and the child likes it, there is a greater chance that your child will wear the helmet.

Q8: Do I need to wear a helmet riding on trails?

A: Yes, helmets should always be worn when bicycling, whether on- or off-road.