

# Bike Safety

**Every day, approximately 1,000 children are rushed to emergency centers because of bicycle accidents.**

Follow these tips to keep kids safe:

## **Always wear a helmet.**

A helmet is the most important safety device available to prevent head injury and death from a bicycle crash. Helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent. Children whose parents wear a helmet while riding a bike are 90 percent more likely to wear a helmet, too.

## **Choose carefully when purchasing a helmet.**

Purchase helmets that meet standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Check inside the helmet for a label. Do not buy helmets that are used, as you do not know if they meet safety standards or if they have a crash history. A helmet that has been in a serious fall or crash should be replaced, as it may not provide adequate protection in another crash.

## **Make sure the helmet fits.**

A helmet should not rock back and forth or side to side and should fit squarely on the child's head. It should cover the top of the forehead and not slide down over the child's eyes when pushed or pulled. The chin strap should fit snugly, allowing only 1 to 2 finger widths between the strap and the chin.

## **Use safety accessories.**

Bicycles should have at least one white front reflector and a red rear reflector. Pedals should have reflectors, too. Daytime riding is the safest so avoid riding at dusk and later. If riding at dawn or dusk, use a headlight and wear reflective (not just light-colored) clothing.



## Choose the best bike for your child's size and abilities.

The rider should be able to straddle the bike with both feet flat on the ground. When seated, the child's foot should reach the pedal at its lowest position. Handlebars should be set with the grips at seat level. Most children lack the hand size or strength to squeeze handbrakes, making pedal brakes a better choice. Use handbrakes only when the child is comfortable and skilled in balance, riding in a straight line and stopping.

## Keep the bike in working order.

Make sure the seat, handlebars and wheels fit tightly. Check and oil the chain regularly. Check brakes to be sure they work well. Check air pressure and wear on tires.

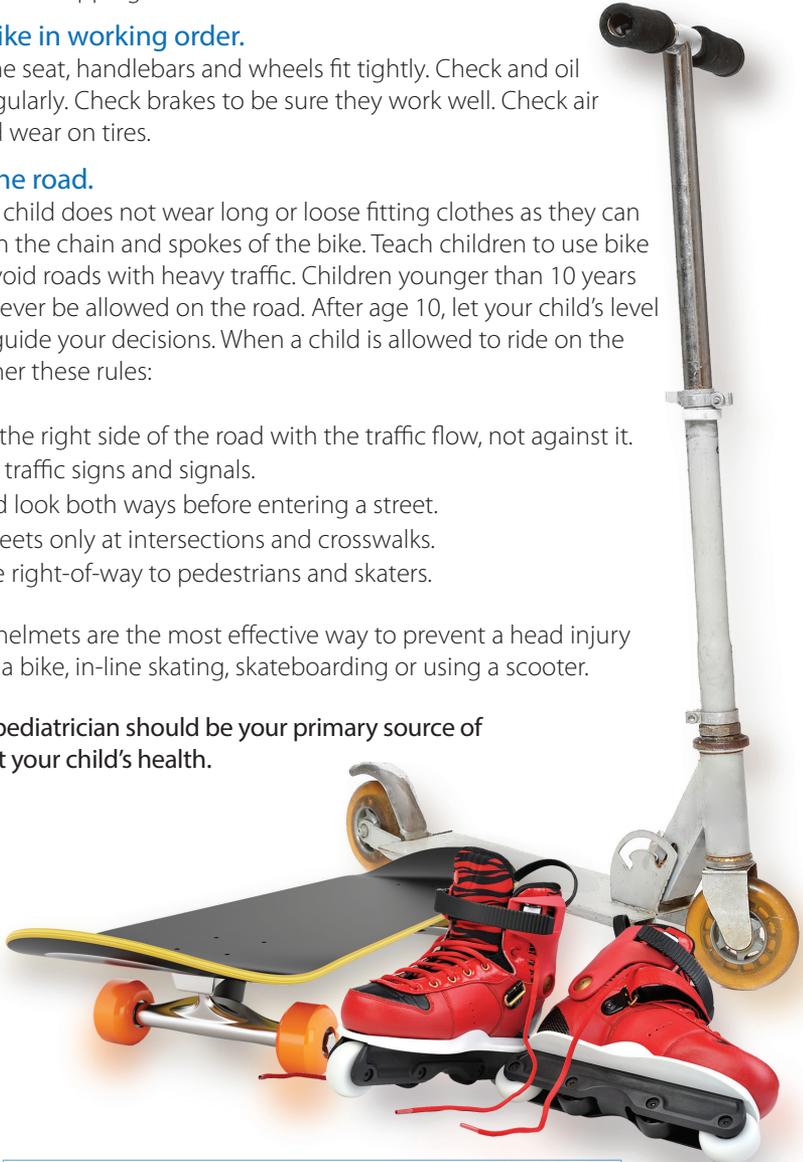
## Safety on the road.

Be sure your child does not wear long or loose fitting clothes as they can get caught in the chain and spokes of the bike. Teach children to use bike paths and avoid roads with heavy traffic. Children younger than 10 years old should never be allowed on the road. After age 10, let your child's level of maturity guide your decisions. When a child is allowed to ride on the road, teach her these rules:

- Ride on the right side of the road with the traffic flow, not against it.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Stop and look both ways before entering a street.
- Enter streets only at intersections and crosswalks.
- Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and skaters.

Remember, helmets are the most effective way to prevent a head injury when riding a bike, in-line skating, skateboarding or using a scooter.

**Your child's pediatrician should be your primary source of advice about your child's health.**



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