

# Wear a Helmet, Stay Safe

## Frequently Asked Questions

### When should I wear my helmet?

A helmet is the single most effective way to prevent and reduce the severity of head injury. Even at low speeds, a crash can result in serious injury. A helmet should be worn at all times when riding, but it should be removed to prevent strangulation when children get off their bikes to play on playground equipment. A helmet only protects what it covers and will not prevent injury to the neck or face. Do not take unnecessary risks because you are wearing a helmet.

### Why shouldn't I purchase a helmet for my infant?

Children less than 12 months old do not have adequate head control to support the weight of a helmet or safely sit in a bicycle child seat or trailer.

### When should I replace my helmet?

One crash and it's trash! A helmet should be replaced after any impact. During impact, the lining of the helmet compresses to absorb energy. The damage to the lining reduces its shock absorption capacity for future accidents. Children should also replace their helmets as they begin to outgrow them.



### How do I know if the helmet fits properly?

With the helmet level on the head, the bottom rim of the helmet should come down to two finger widths above the eyebrows. The side straps should form a "V" just below each earlobe. The chinstrap should be adjusted loose enough for easy breathing, but snug enough that the helmet does not shift. Here are two quick fit tests:

1. Shake head up and down and from side to side. If the helmet rocks forward or back and forth, it is not fitting properly.
2. Open mouth wide, like a big yawn. You should see and the wearer should feel the helmet pull down on the head.

### What is a multi-sport helmet?

A multi-sport helmet is certified for several activities, like skating and riding bikes and scooters. If you plan to snowboard, skateboard or participate in other extreme sports, a specialized helmet should be purchased. No helmet is guaranteed to provide multi-impact protection.

### How do I care for my helmet?

Your helmet should be cleaned using only a soft cloth, warm water and mild dish soap. Helmets should be stored out of direct sunlight in a cool, dry place. Most helmet manufacturers discourage painting or placing stickers on helmets.

## Enjoy Biking. Ride Safely.

The clinical staff at Valley Medical Center have reviewed this handout. Your child's needs are unique. Please discuss specific concerns with your child's healthcare provider.



## TIPS FOR SAFE BIKE RIDING

- You are responsible for your own safety.
- Always wear a properly fit bike helmet with the buckle fastened securely.
- Be alert and pay attention. Do not wear headphones while riding.
- Stop and check traffic before riding onto the street.
- Keep both hands ready to brake.
- Avoid broken pavement, loose gravel, and leaves – these can cause you to lose control of your bike.
- Obey traffic signs and signals.
- Ride on the right hand side of the street.
- Make eye contact with drivers to ensure they see you.
- Be extra careful turning left – motorists don't expect it. Use hand signals.
- Give cars and pedestrians the right of way.
- Check your brakes and tire pressure before riding.
- Wear light or bright-colored clothing so that motorists can see you.
- Avoid riding at night.

## Children's Therapy

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