

Bike Helmets: Quick Fit Check

Use this easy 3-point check as a quick way to test for a proper helmet fit.

1. Eyes

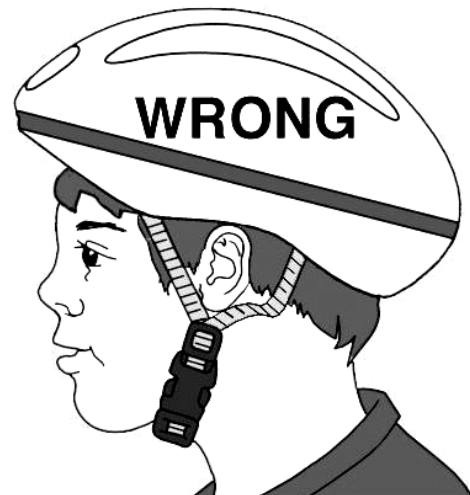
Helmet sits level on your child's head and rests low on the forehead, 1 to 2 finger widths above the eyebrow. Your child should be able to see the very edge of her helmet looking up past her eyebrows. A helmet pushed up too high will not protect the face or head well in a fall or crash.

2. Ears

The straps are even and form a "Y" under the earlobe (where the earlobe meets the head) and are snug against the head.

3. Mouth

The buckled chin strap is loose enough so that your child can breathe. There should be enough room so you can insert a finger between the buckle and chin, but tight enough that if your child opens his mouth, you can feel the helmet pull down on top.



™ "Eyes, Ears, Mouth Test" courtesy
Bicycle Coalition of Maine

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Helmets provide the best protection against injury whether your child is riding a bike, scooter or on skates. Wearing a helmet can prevent about 85 percent of head injuries from bike crashes. A helmet will only protect when it fits well.

Choosing a Helmet

- Choose a helmet that meets safety standards. Look for a CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Committee) sticker inside the helmet.
- Helmet costs vary. Costly helmets are not always better. Choose one that your child likes and will wear.
- Check used or hand-me-down helmets with care and never wear a helmet that is cracked, broken or has been in a crash. Used helmets may have cracks you cannot see. Older helmets may not meet current safety standards.
- Let your child pick out his helmet.
- To encourage your child to wear a helmet, start the helmet habit early and wear one yourself.

Fitting the Helmet

- **Adjust the fit pads:** Helmets come with fit pads to help ensure a proper fit. Use the pads where there is space at the front, back and/or sides of the helmet to get a snug fit. Move pads around to touch your child's head evenly all the way around. Pads can be exchanged for thinner ones as your child grows.

Checking the Fit

- With one hand, gently lift the front of the helmet up and back. The helmet should not move up and back to reveal the forehead. If it does, tighten the strap in front of the ear. Now lift the back of the helmet up and

forward from the back. Can you move the helmet more than an inch? If so, tighten the back strap. If you can move the helmet from side to side, add thicker pads at the side.

- When done, the helmet should feel level, solid on your child's head and be comfortable. If it doesn't fit keep working with the fit pads and straps or try another helmet.

Safety Tips

- Teach your child to take her helmet off before playing at the playground or climbing on equipment or trees. The straps can get caught on poles or branches and cause a choking hazard.
- Leave hair loose or tie it back at the base of the neck.
- Bike helmets can be worn with inline roller skates or scooters. For skateboarding or snow-boarding you will need another type of helmet.
- If your child does aggressive, trick, extreme skating or skateboarding, look for a true multi-impact helmet that has a sticker inside saying it meets ASTM F1492.
- Helmets are good only for one crash. Replace the helmet after a crash.

For More Information

- **Your health care provider**
- **Children's Resource Line:**
(206) 987-2500 or 1-866-987-2500
toll-free Washington, Alaska, Montana, Idaho
- **www.seattlechildrens.org**
- **www.bhsi.org (Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute)**

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health care provider.

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