



Prevention of cycling injuries in children

Information in this article is taken from research based in Canada, USA and UK

- Correctly fitted bicycle helmets are effective in preventing injury to the head and face.
- Helmets provide a 66 to 88% reduction in the risk of head, brain and severe brain injury for all ages of cyclists.
- Bicycle helmets with chin protection can prevent injury to the lower face and jaw.
- Parental knowledge and helmet availability, accessibility, cost and ease of use all influence proper helmet use.
- While there is no concussion-proof helmet, a helmet can help protect your child or teen from a serious brain or head injury.
- Replace any bicycle helmet that is damaged or has been involved in a crash. Cycle helmets are designed to help protect the rider's brain and head from one serious impact, such as a fall onto the pavement. You may not be able to see the damage to the foam, but the foam materials in the helmet will crush after an impact. That means that the foam in the helmet won't be able to help protect the rider's brain.
- No evidence was found for an increased risk of rotational head injury with a helmet compared to without a helmet.
- Parents serve as role models to their children, and if parents wear a helmet, their children are more likely to also.
- Having peers and adults model proper helmet use is effective in increasing use among children.
- Strategies that work to increase helmet use include:
 - provision of bicycle paths and lanes
 - bicycle traffic lights; and bicycle crossings
 - community-based programmes and interventions
 - provision of free or subsidised helmets
 - provision of free helmet and fitting with each purchase of a bicycle
 - in-school interventions
 - ?preventive measures, which increase levels of control are likely to be successful. ?
- It was found that cycle helmets designed to the Standards currently used in the UK (EN 1078 for child and adult helmets and EN 1080 for younger child helmets) would, based on biomechanical principles, be expected to be effective in many cycle accident conditions.

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Key opportunities to prevent injury

- As a parent wear a cycle helmet.
- Targeted parent education campaigns promoting the benefits of bicycle helmets, and modelling their correct and appropriate use
- Targeted school campaigns promoting the benefits and correct use of bicycle helmets
- Consider children's attitudes towards helmets and helmet wearing when designing promotional campaigns.
- Ensure increased enforcement of bicycle helmet use legislation
- Continued development of dedicated bicycle paths and lanes

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