

Protect Yourself... Wear a Helmet!

What do bicycling, horseback riding, baseball and in-line skating all have in common? Helmets! The trick is that different sports require a different type of helmet to help protect participants from the different types of head injuries common to that particular sport.

All helmets are not created equal; beyond picking the right helmet for the sport, buyers should look inside the helmet for information on standards the helmet complies with. Bike helmets for example should carry a CPSC, Snell, ASTM, or ANSI sticker or label.

Fit is key

A loose helmet cannot protect the head as well as one that is properly fit. The Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute suggests buying a brand and size that fits well prior to adjustments, and then using the adjustable straps and/or sizing pads to ensure a snug fit. Select a helmet that fits you or your child now, not a helmet to "grow into."

Helmets save lives

- According to the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, a bicycle helmet reduces the risk of serious head and brain injury by 85%.
- More than 70,000 persons need hospital emergency room treatment each year for injuries related to skateboarding according to the CPSC.
- Head injuries cause three-quarters of about 900 bicycle deaths each year, according to the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, a helmet advocacy program of the Washington, D.C.-area Bicyclist Association.
- Another 82,000 people suffer brain injuries each year while playing sports such as baseball and football, etc., according to the Brain Injury Association in Alexandria, Va.
- Brain surgeons and doctors across the U.S. agree that wearing helmets can save lives.

Both children and adults should wear the appropriate helmet when participating in the following sports, or any recreational activity where head injuries are a risk:

ATV riding
Baseball
Bicycling
Football
Horse-back riding
In-line skating
Rock climbing

Skateboarding
Softball

For handling sports-related injuries and other emergencies, everyone should be trained in first aid.