

# Answering Questions About Bicycle Helmets

## **Which Helmet Is Better, a Hard Shell or Soft Shell?**

Whether you buy a soft shell or a hard shell helmet is a matter of personal preference. The most important thing to look for in either helmet is a certification sticker (CPSC) and a good fit. Both types of helmets have thick layers of polystyrene, the firm styrofoam that cushions the skull in a crash. Hard shell helmets tend to be heavier than soft shell ones. If you buy a soft shell helmet that comes with a cloth cover, be sure to keep the cover on. It functions to hold the helmet together in a crash.

## **Where Can I Get a Helmet?**

Helmets meeting the safety standards are available at bicycle shops and at some discount, department and toy stores in adult, toddler and children's sizes and styles.

## **Can Other Kinds of Helmets Be Used (Football, Motorcycle)?**

No. Each type of helmet is designed for protection in specific conditions and may not protect in bike crashes or falls. It is not advisable to wear the incorrect type of helmet for any of these uses. Bike helmets are very protective in head-first falls at fairly high speed, as well as being light and well ventilated for comfort and acceptability.

## **Are Helmets Available for Very Young Children?**

Yes. A child should be able to sit upright independently before being placed in a bicycle carrier. The child's physician should be consulted to make sure that the child's neck muscles are strong enough to support a helmet comfortably and safely. Helmets (and bike travel) are not recommended for babies younger than age 1, whose neck structure is relatively weak.

## **How Long Will a Child's Helmet Fit?**

Unlike a pair of shoes, a toddler's or a child's helmet should fit for at least several years or even more. Most models have removable fitting-pads that can be replaced with thinner ones as the child's head grows.

## **How Should a Helmet Fit?**

A helmet should be worn squarely on top of the head, covering the top of the forehead. As a form of measurement, the helmet should be two fingers distance between the eyebrow and helmet. If it is tipped back, it will not protect the forehead. The helmet fits well if it doesn't move around on the head or slide down over the wearer's eyes when pushed or pulled. The chin strap should be adjusted to fit snugly and the straps should be placed in front and in back of the ear.

## **Can a Helmet Be Reused After a Crash?**

No. It will not provide adequate protection in another crash.



For more information, contact  
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