

A helmet is only meant to be a last resort for safety. It does not replace safe riding skills, a safe bike, and supervision where necessary. Wear a helmet, but ride as though you *weren't* wearing one.

Quick checklist:

Make sure that your helmet:

- ✓ is the right size for you
- ✓ is meant for the kind of riding you're doing
- ✓ is level when done up
- ✓ has its straps adjusted properly (snug and lying flat)
- ✓ is treated carefully, and has not been damaged
- ✓ is comfortable

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A poorly-adjusted or damaged helmet might provide some protection, but will it be enough?



A properly fitted helmet

Buying a Helmet

- Ensure that the helmet is certified. Look for a small sticker on the inside that reads 'CPSC' (United States & Canada) or 'CSA' (Canada). See our website for details.
- If you let your child pick out his or her helmet, there's a much greater likelihood that it will be worn.
- The helmet must fit *now*, and not be 'grown into'. Be sure it is worn always, and ensure that you are a good role model for your child/ren (and others) by wearing your helmet each time you ride.
- Price isn't the best indicator of safety. Higher-priced helmets generally weigh less, have more ventilation, and a more easily-adjusted/comfortable strap system, but aren't necessarily safer.
- Avoid buying or using a skateboard-style helmet. Their straps angle in from the edge of the helmet, rather than lying flat against the face. These strap systems do not allow proper tightening, and the helmets are designed for different impacts than those usually encountered while cycling. Also, avoid buying a full-face helmet if the rider will be riding on roads or pathways. Most models restrict vision and hearing, are quite heavy, and have little ventilation.
- Don't accept a used helmet for you or for your child, or give an old helmet away. If it's not safe for you or your child, it's not fit for anyone else to wear.

Replacing a Helmet

- Replace your helmet every three to five years, or after it has been in an impact (either from a collision, or from falling from any height, such as from a shelf). Children's helmets should be replaced more often, as they get outgrown and are generally subject to more damage through handling.



Adjusting and Wearing the Helmet

- Hold the helmet upside down, with the front (visor) facing towards you.
- Straighten out the straps.
- Hold the straps in place with your thumbs.
- Put the helmet on and make sure its level.
- Check that helmet is the right size:
 - Most helmets have an adjusting mechanism at the back (i.e., at the top of the neck); this may need to be loosened or tightened to make a proper fit before going on to the next steps.
 - Grasp the top of the helmet and gently twist side to side to be sure it's snug enough.
 - If it's too loose, it either needs padding added (one layer only), or is too large.
 - Next, try putting a finger between the helmet and your forehead; there shouldn't be any more space than the width of a finger tip. If there's too much space, the helmet is too large.
 - If the inside of the helmet doesn't come down close to the scalp, or pinches, it's too small.
- Adjust the straps to make sure they are lying flat against your face.
- The straps should form a 'V' around the ears, with the clasps coming just below the ear lobes.
 - If the clasps or sliders are too high or low, move them to the proper position.
- Buckle up the strap; when it's done up, it should rest against the underside of the chin.

Checking for Fit

After doing up the straps, try these checks to be certain that the helmet is secure (see picture below):

- A** — There should only be room for one or two fingers under the chin strap when it's done up.
- B** — The clasps should be just below the ears.
- C** — The front of the helmet should be low enough that there is only one or two fingers' width between the eyebrows and the helmet.
- D** — There should be no more than a finger's space between the forehead and the helmet. With one hand, try gently lifting the front of the helmet up and backward. Then try lifting the back of the helmet up and forward. Grasp the top of the helmet with your hand. Gently try rocking it from side to side, and twist it around. Movement should be minimal.



If the helmet doesn't look or feel secure, try these adjustments:

Situation...Helmet can move too far forward when the back is lifted up
Solution...Tighten the back straps (the ones behind the ears).

Situation...Helmet can move too far back when the front is lifted up
Solution...Tighten the front straps (the ones in front of the ears).

Situation...With straps undone, helmet rocks side to side, or turns more than an inch to either side when twisted gently from the top.
Solution...This indicates that the helmet is too big. A properly fitting helmet must be chosen.

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