

## **What to look for when buying a bike helmet**

### **First buy the right size helmet:**

Bicycle helmet size is based on head size, not age. To ensure you are getting the right helmet size, it's important to measure the child's head. Using a regular tape measure, start above the eyebrow and wrap it around the head. Jot down the number of inches, and bring it with you when you go to buy a helmet. Look for helmets with universal fitting rings, they are easier to adjust as a child grows than foam fitting pads.

### **On the helmet itself some points to consider:**

Look for and buy only helmets that have a sticker inside saying they meet the CPSC standard. The Snell B-95 and N-94 standards are even better. Multisport helmets (i.e. skating and cycling) should carry stickers certifying each sport.

A good bicycle helmet must be able to absorb impact energy just as motorcycle helmets do to prevent brain injury. Most of the best helmets have three elements to do that: a shell, a liner and straps and buckle.

**Shell:** A full-cover hard shell spreads the impact energy in a collision with a sharp or pointed object. The shell can have some vents and still be strong enough. Fiberglass, Lexan and ABS plastic are all good shell materials. The shell should not have any sharp snag points. Vents should be included on children's helmets to help keep them cool while they are riding.

**Liner:** A good helmet must have a stiff polystyrene (Styrofoam) or related liner.

**Strap & Buckle:** The helmet must stay on your head even if you hit hard surfaces more than once--a car, perhaps, and then a curb. The helmet needs a strong strap and fastener.

### **To work properly a bicycle helmet must fit properly**

- The helmet should sit level on the head covering the forehead in front.
- The chin strap splitter should lie right under the ears.
- All straps should lie flat, not be twisted
- The chin straps should allow only one finger between the strap and neck
- The helmet shouldn't rock from side to side.
- The helmet should rock slightly forwards and backwards. But if it can lift up off the forehead or come down over the eyebrows it needs further adjustment.
- Trim loose ends of overlapping straps
- Add-on stickers and paint are cute but can affect the strength of the shell and may void the warranty.

**Now that you have a helmet, wear it, a helmet on the handlebars does nobody any good!**