



Bicycle Safety

Riding bikes is fun for all members of the family. However, each year many people are injured on bicycles. By following a few simple safety rules, you can help prevent serious injuries.

Selecting a bike

The first step toward safe bike riding is using a bike that is the right size. Choose a bike that is the right size now — not a bike your child will grow into. Take your child with you to buy the bike. Check the following:

- When your child sits on the seat with hands on the handlebars, the balls of both feet should be on the ground.
- When your child straddles the center bar, both feet should be flat on the ground. There should be at least one inch between your child's crotch and the bar.



Do not push your child to ride a two-wheel bike until he or she is ready. This is usually at age 5 or 6. Your child should begin riding a bike with training wheels; then, they can be removed when your child feels ready. Stick with coaster (foot) brakes until your child is older and can use hand brakes easily and safely.

Tips for choosing a helmet

The second step toward safe bike riding is to always wear a helmet. A bike helmet can reduce the risk of

head injury by 85 percent when worn correctly. In Houston, it is required for children younger than 18 years old to wear a helmet.

Make sure the helmet is safety approved. Look for a CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission) sticker on the helmet.

Make sure the helmet fits right. Use the adjustable pads so the helmet stays in place when your child shakes his or her head.



Always fasten the chin strap. If the strap is not fastened, the helmet may fly off if your child falls off the bike.



Adjust the strap so it holds the helmet snug but is still comfortable. You should feel the strap pulling on the chin when the mouth is opened. The helmet should not slip around. It should be worn low on the forehead, just above the eyebrows — not tipped back on the head.

When to replace a helmet

After a crash, the helmet should be replaced. You cannot always see the damage, but the impact may crush the foam of the helmet.



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Your child will need a new helmet as his or her head grows. Most manufacturers suggest that a helmet be replaced after five years of use. If the helmet is taken care of, it can last longer.

Making sure your child wears the helmet

Here are some ideas for getting your child to wear a helmet every time he or she rides a bike.

- Let your child help pick out the helmet. Your child can decorate the helmet with stickers to make it more appealing but do not allow any changes to the helmet's design or structure.
- If you ride a bike, wear a helmet yourself. Young children learn by watching their parents.
- Your child must wear the helmet every time he or she rides a bike. Be consistent and enforce the rule.
- Encourage other parents to have their children wear helmets when riding.
- Praise your child for wearing the helmet and obeying all safety rules.



Rules of the road

Teach your child that a bicycle is not a toy. It is a vehicle. Riding double and doing tricks are dangerous.

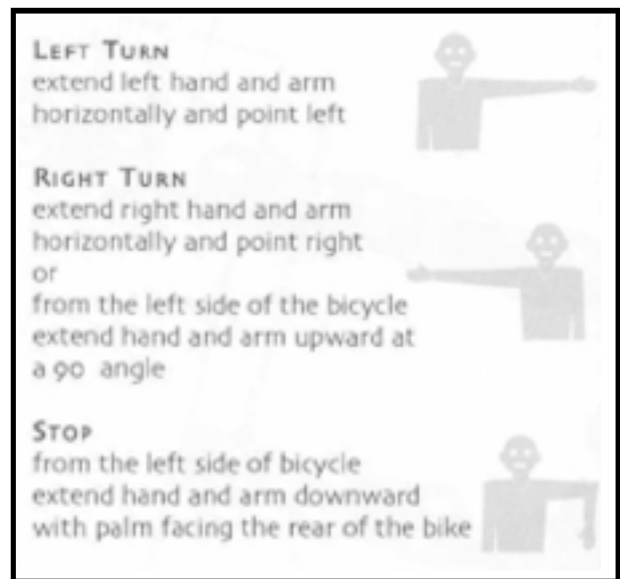
Older children need to learn and be able to follow the rules of the road before they are allowed to ride in the street. Children younger than 10 years should ride on sidewalks and bike paths.

Help your child plan the safest routes to ride to the school, park and library. Use routes away from streets, driveways and parking lots. Decide where

your child is allowed to ride and where your child is not allowed to ride.

Here are some other bike safety rules and tips to share with your child. Enforce your rules every time.

- Always wear a helmet.
- One rider per seat. No one should ride on the handlebars or on the pegs.
- Always look three ways (LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT) before crossing the street.
- Ride near the curb. Ride in the same direction as the other traffic.
- Keep your hands on the handlebars.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- It is not safe to ride in the street at night.
- Have a white light on the front and a red light or red reflector on the rear of your bike.
- Make sure your brakes work well.
- Use hand and arm signals.



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