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for Parents

NO. 2 • SPRING 2000

A PROGRAM OF CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER

Be sure your kids are head smart!

Common questions and answers for you and your family about bicycle helmets and safety:

Why are bicycle helmets so important?

Bicycle helmets are a simple way to prevent head injury. Most deaths related to bicycle falls and collisions involve head injuries. This means that wearing a helmet can save your child's life.

Do kids have to wear a bike helmet?

Yes. Not only will it protect them from a preventable injury, but it is also the law for children under 15 in Connecticut.

How can I tell if a bicycle helmet fits properly?

The helmet should fit comfortable and securely. It should be worn so that it is level on the head (not tilted back on the crown or pulled low over the forehead). You should not be able to move the helmet in any direction, back to front or side to side. The chinstrap should be securely fastened. If needed, the helmet sizing pads can help improve the fit.

Will bike helmets protect during other sports?

Bicycle helmets offer head protection for sports like in-line skating and roller blading. In addition, wrist guards, knee pads and elbow pads are recommended for these sports.

What if my child refuses to wear a helmet?

Make a firm rule in your household that EVERYONE wears a bike helmet: no helmet, no bike. Be sure to praise your child for wearing a helmet, and set a good example by wearing one yourself. •



Correct way to wear a bike helmet

Free Bike Helmets!



Enter the National SAFE KIDS Campaign SAFETY AWARDS CONTEST for kids!

Plastic safety devices, like smoke alarms, seat belts, sports equipment and bike helmets keep kids safe every day. Yet these devices don't get used as often as they should. Your child's story can help others to learn how important these devices are.



To enter, kids choose one safety product and tell us how it kept them or someone they know from getting seriously hurt or how it has saved a life.

The first 2,000 kids who enter will receive a FREE Bell® bike helmet! Twenty grand prize winners will also receive a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond and may be featured in the news.

★ Kids must be in grades 3-8 to qualify.
★ One entry form per child.
★ Entries must be received by June 1, 2000.

**Call (860) 545-9988
or log onto
www.safekids.org
for an official entry form.**



Get into the game!

Before the whistle blows, be sure your child is safe on the field.

More than 3 million children ages 5 to 14 suffer sports and recreational injuries each year. Nearly 1 million of these kids are hurt seriously enough to require a visit to the emergency room.

The majority of these injuries occur during practice rather than during games. Sports-specific protective equipment, pre-season conditioning programs, a safe environment, and enforcement of safety rules all help reduce the number and severity of sports and recreation-related injuries.

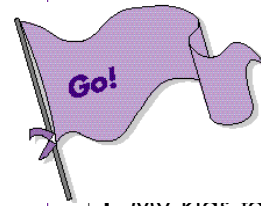
Teaching your kids to play safely is the best coaching you can give them. Be sure your child plays safe and smart using these guidelines:



- My kids drink plenty of fluids before and after playing sports, and eat a well-balanced diet.
- Before the season begins, my kids get in shape for their sport and have regular check-ups with their doctor.
- My kids' coaches and/or athletic trainers have a list of emergency contacts.
- When I car pool, I make sure all kids have their own child safety seat or seat belt and sit in a rear seat.



- My kids warm up with stretches before their sport.
- My kids always wear the right, properly fitted protective gear.
- Field surface and playing areas are inspected and safe before my kids begin playing.
- My kids play team sports under the supervision of a coach and a certified athletic trainer.



- My kids are properly supervised at all times.
- My kids take regular breaks at practice and at the game.
- My kids do not "play through an injury." •

Play safe!

Each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency rooms with injuries associated with playground equipment. Most injuries occur when a child falls from the equipment onto the ground. Use these guidelines to check your home and local playground equipment for safety.

- Make sure surfaces around playground equipment have at least 12 inches of protective surface material. This surfacing should extend at least 6 feet in all directions from the play equipment.

- Check for sharp points or edges in equipment.
- Check for dangerous hardware, like open "S" hooks or protruding bolt ends.
- Look out for tripping hazards, like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps and rocks.
- Make sure that spaces that could trap children – such as openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs – measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.
- Maintain playgrounds regularly and be sure to carefully supervise children on playgrounds. •

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