

Keep Kids Safe

A Parent's Guide to

Helmet and Recreation Safety



Always stay with your young child to help prevent and reduce injuries.

Keep Kids Safe

A Parent's Guide to

Helmet and Recreation Safety



Always stay with your young child to help prevent and reduce injuries.



Partners in Children's Safety



Heads Up! Helmets On!

The purpose of this booklet is to provide safety information to children and parents on helmets and related activities. Wearing a helmet when participating in activities, such as bicycling, skiing and skating can reduce the severity of head injuries. Whether you are doing summer wheeled activities or winter activities, use this booklet to learn how to stay safe while having fun.

A Quick Look at Injuries...

- Injuries are the leading cause of death among Canadian children.
- From 2000-2002, more than 1 300 children visited the IWK Emergency Department with a head injury.
- Most head injuries occur to children between the ages of 5 and 9.
- Other body parts commonly injured from participating in wheeled and winter activities are the wrists, knees, and elbows.

Table of Contents



Helmets.....1



Summer Wheels.....4



Winter Fun.....7



Motorized Vehicles.....11





Helmets



Safety Tip

Bicycle helmets are only effective for a single impact. Make sure your helmet is safe by replacing it if it is dropped, has a crack, or has been in a crash. Never buy second-hand helmets because you do not know if they have been damaged.

Head injuries can happen during many activities or sports. The effects of a head injury can last a lifetime and may even be fatal. Helmets are an easy and effective way to protect your head during your favourite activities. In the event of a fall or blow to the head, helmets reduce the potential of injury to your head by absorbing the blow and spreading the impact over the entire helmet.

Wearing a bicycle helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85%.

Buying Checklist

When choosing and using your helmet, go through this checklist to make sure it fits correctly and is designed for the activity you plan to use it for.



Heads Up Helmets On!

Child Safety Link recommends wearing the right helmet every time you are on wheels.

| ACTIVITY | HELMET TYPE |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Biking | Bike |
| Skateboarding | Skateboard |
| Scootering | Bike |
| In-line Skating | Bike or Skateboard |

Follow the **2V1 Rule** to make sure your helmet fits right.

For more information visit

CHILDSafetyLINK.ca

Special thanks to *Aliant* for supporting helmet safety.

Partners in Children's Safety



**2V1
RULE**

2 Fingers above eyebrows

V
Straps form a V under ears

1 Finger between strap and chin

CHILD Safety LINK

- Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully prior to purchase to make sure the helmet fits your needs.
- Try the helmet on for fit before you buy it. Helmets should fit snug and comfortable.
- Buy a helmet that fits your child now, not one they will grow in to.
- Avoid buying used helmets.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Replace your helmet when it is damaged or every 5 years. Many helmets can only take one impact before they must be replaced. Read your instructions carefully.



How do I know if my summer helmet fits right?

Remember the **2V1 Rule**: The helmet should sit level, **2** finger widths above the eyebrows; the straps should form a **V**-shape under the ears; and **1** finger should fit between the chin and the fastened strap. Helmets should be comfortably snug.



The Right Helmet

Which helmet do I wear for which activity?

| ACTIVITY | TYPE OF HELMET |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Biking | Bicycle |
| Scotering | Bicycle |
| Skateboarding | Skateboard |
| In-line Skating | Bicycle or Skateboard |
| Skiing | Ski/Snowboard |
| Snowboarding | Ski/Snowboard |
| Ice Hockey | Hockey |
| Ice Skating | Hockey |
| Sledding | Hockey or Ski |



Why can't I wear the same helmet for all activities?

Helmets are designed and tested for special conditions. The best protection will come from the helmet that was specially designed for your activity. Although any properly fitted helmet will work better than no helmet, you will be safest if you use the right gear for your activity.

Summer Wheels



Safety Tip

Never alter your helmet. (Do not shave or cut the foam, remove permanent pieces, paint or apply stickers).

Getting Kids into the Helmet Habit:

- Start young.
- Make wearing helmets a family rule.
- Parents can set a good example by wearing their helmets too!

Summer is a good time to play outside and get some exercise. Wheeled activities, such as bicycling, in-line skating, skateboarding and riding scooters are fun for kids. Keep your kids safe on their wheels this summer.

- Teach your children how to use their summer wheels properly. Make sure they can stay in control, keep their balance and stop safely.
- Always supervise young children.
- Children under 10 should not ride their summer wheels in traffic. Older children must be taught to obey the rules of the road.
- Always stay off busy roads and look out for cars.
- Put sunscreen on before going outside to play.
- Look for a smooth surface, free of potholes and cracks, to ride.
- Never use summer wheels without the proper safety equipment.



It only takes a minute... Andrew is riding his bike to his friend Michael's house. Michael only lives down the street so Andrew doesn't buckle up his helmet for the short ride. Half way to Michael's house Andrew hits a rock on the road, his bike flips forward and he goes over the handle bars. His helmet flies off right before he hits the pavement.



Bicycles and Tricycles

- Always wear a properly fitted bicycle helmet.
- Make sure the bicycle or tricycle is the right size for your child. (Their toes should be able to touch the ground on both sides of the bike.) You will need to adjust the handlebar and seat height as your child grows.
- Use reflectors on bikes and clothing if you must ride at night.
- Inspect the brakes, tires and chain regularly to make sure they are in good working order.



Safety Tip

Do not ride on the street when you are riding a scooter, skateboarding or in-line skating. Always choose safe locations where there is no traffic and there are smooth surfaces.

Scooters

- Always wear a properly fitted bicycle helmet, kneepads and elbow pads.
- Adjust the handlebars so your child does not lean over.

Skateboards

- Always wear a properly fitted skateboarding helmet, kneepads, elbow pads and wrist guards.
- New skateboarders should use small boards with small wheels.
- Inexperienced skaters should not attempt stunts.

In-line Skates

- Always wear a properly fitted skateboarding or bicycle helmet.
- Also wear kneepads, elbow pads and wrist guards.
- Make sure skates are the right size for your child.



It is law in Nova Scotia that people of any age, not just children, must wear a helmet when biking, riding a scooter, skateboarding and in-line skating.



Winter Fun



Is it safe for my child to build snow forts? Snow forts and tunnels may collapse on a child and suffocate them. Forts built in snow banks near the road can also be covered with heavy snow by the snowplough, trapping the child inside.

Children love winter activities such as skiing, snowboarding, sledding, skating and hockey. These activities can provide hours of fun and exercise. Keep your kids safe by teaching them about winter safety.



- Dress warmly with mitts, hats, winter coats, snow pants and warm boots.
- Wear neck warmers instead of scarves so they won't get caught under sleds, in doors or ski lifts.
- Change out of wet clothing quickly.
- Wear bright-coloured clothing to be seen easily.
- Walk carefully on snow and ice to prevent falls.
- Children should always stay away from snow blowers and snow ploughs.
- Remember to put sunscreen on exposed skin. You can still get sunburned on a cold day!



Can I wear a hat under my helmet? You should never wear hats underneath helmets. Your helmet should be snug to your head. Most winter helmets are insulated so you do not need to wear a hat to keep warm.



It only takes a minute... Sarah is playing in the snow. She thinks it would be fun to build a fort in the snow bank along the road. A little while later the snowplough comes along to clear the road. Sarah is inside her fort and the snowplough driver cannot see her.



Safety Tip

Wear warm, close-fitting clothing when skiing and snowboarding. Loose clothing can get entangled in lifts, tow ropes and ski poles.

- Take regular breaks. Go inside to warm up and have a drink of water, juice or milk.
- Stop before you get too tired.
- Keep children indoors if the temperature falls below -25°C (-13°F) or if the wind chill is -28°C (-15°F) or lower.
- Always supervise young children. Children should never participate in winter activities alone.

Downhill Skiing

- Always wear a properly fitted ski/snowboard helmet and ski goggles.
- New skiers should take lessons from a qualified instructor.
- Inspect ski equipment regularly to ensure it is in good condition.
- Stay in control and avoid icy hills.
- Ski in designated areas and trails that match your ability.
- Look out for other skiers and snowboarders on the slopes.

Snowboarding

- Always wear a properly fitted ski/snowboard helmet, ski goggles and wrist guards.
- New snowboarders should take lessons from a qualified instructor. Remember that skiing and snowboarding require different skills.
- Snowboarding is not recommended for young children. Wait until your child is at least 7 years old.
- Inspect snowboards and bindings regularly to ensure they are in good condition.
- Stay in control and avoid icy hills.
- Snowboard in designated areas and trails that match your ability (e.g. no stunts for new snowboarders).
- Look out for other skiers and snowboarders on the slopes.

Almost half of all injuries occur at the end of the day when you are tired and hungry.



It only takes a minute...

5 year old Jennifer is sledding on the small hill next to her house. Her dad is watching her from the driveway as he is shovelling snow. Jennifer hits an icy patch and loses control of the sled. The sled is heading for a tree and she is not wearing her helmet.

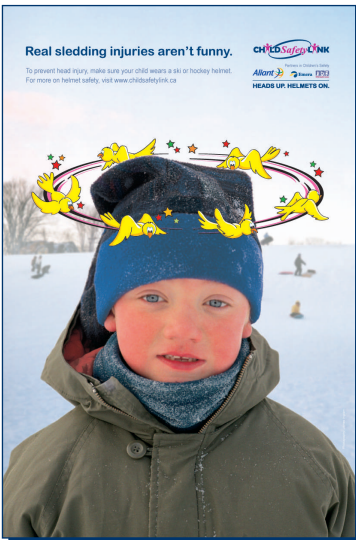
Sledding

- Wear a properly fitted ski or hockey helmet.
- Choose a safe hill with a gentle slope, long run off area and no obstacles nearby (such as trees, rocks, or fences).
- Stay away from roads and cars.
- Sled only during daylight so you can see where you are going.
- Avoid icy hills.
- Choose a sled that you can steer. Inner tubes, crazy carpets and snow disks can spin out of control easily.
- Sit up or kneel on the sled with arms and legs tucked in. Do not go head first down the hill.
- Roll off a sled that won't stop.
- An adult should go on the sled with children under 5.
- Look out for other sliders when sliding down the hill and walk back up the side of the hill away from other sliders.



Safety Tip

Do not chew gum or eat candy while on the ice. You can easily choke if you lose your balance or fall.



Ice Hockey

- Always wear an approved hockey helmet and full face mask.
- Always wear full hockey gear, including gloves, shoulder pads, elbow pads, shin pads, mouth guard, and athletic support.
- Make sure all equipment is in good condition and fits properly.
- Play by the rules (no elbowing, cross-checking or hitting from behind).
- Look up when approaching the boards to avoid neck injuries.
- Train for the sport and warm-up before playing.

Ice Skating

- Always wear a properly fitted hockey helmet.
- Consider wearing knee, wrist and elbow pads.
- Make sure the ice is at least 15 cm (6 in.) thick for single skaters or 20 cm (8 in.) thick for skating parties. Call your local authorities to check the ice thickness.
- Never skate near open or moving water.
- Stay away from cracks, bumps or rocks in the ice that you could trip over.
- Make sure skates fit properly for good ankle support.
- Make sure skate blades are not dull or rusted.
- Put skate guards on the blades when you finish skating.



When should I replace my hockey helmet?

Hockey helmets should be replaced if they have been damaged or every 5 years. However, if any of the foam or plastic inside the helmet is yellowing or has been damaged the helmet should be replaced.

Hockey helmets should be CSA approved.

Motorized Vehicles

All-terrain Vehicles

- It is recommended that children younger than 16 should not ride or operate all-terrain vehicles.
- Do not carry passengers. Most all-terrain vehicles are designed for only one person.
- Stay on designated trails. Never drive on roads or highways.
- Always wear a helmet designed for all-terrain vehicles or motorcycles, eye protection and protective clothing.
- Read and obey your local all-terrain vehicle laws.

Snowmobiles

- Children younger than 16 should not operate snowmobiles.
- Children younger than 6 should never ride on a snowmobile, even with an adult.
- Always wear a snowmobile helmet, eye protection and protective clothing.
- Never tow children in sleds behind snowmobiles.
- Always drive on snowmobile trails and at a safe speed.
- Travel in groups of 2 or more people, never alone.



It only takes a minute... Victor is driving his all-terrain vehicle with his 8 year old son Anthony on the back. They are driving through the woods at 30 km/hr. There is a large tree branch in the middle of the trail. Victor swerves to avoid it causing the all-terrain vehicle to roll over. Anthony is much smaller than the all-terrain vehicle and is pinned underneath it.

Images:

Cover images: Source: Healthy Images CD-Rom Vol. 2, Health Canada (2000)©

Pages 3 & 7: Source: Healthy Images CD-Rom Vol. 1, Health Canada (1997)©

Pages 1, 5, 7, & 10: Source: Healthy Images CD-Rom Vol.2, Health Canada (2000)©

Special thanks to everyone that contributed personal photos for the creation of this home safety guide.

Looking for more information?

Injury Prevention

Child Safety Link

www.childsafetylink.ca, call 1-866-288-1388

Canadian Paediatric Society

www.caringforkids.cps.ca/keepingkidssafe

Safe Kids Canada

www.safekidscanada.ca

Think First – National Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Prevention Foundation

www.thinkfirst.ca

Helmet Safety

Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute

www.bhsi.ca

For more information, contact:

Child Safety Link
IWK Health Centre
5850/5980 University Avenue
PO Box 9700, Halifax NS B3K 6R8
Call (902) 470-6496 or 1-866-288-1388
childsafetylink@iwk.nshealth.ca
www.childsafetylink.ca

July 2005

www.CHILDSafetyLINK.ca