



Cycling Safety Tips for Parents

Cycling is popular with Canadians of all ages. Bicycling injuries can happen to anyone, including you! As a parent and role model, you will influence your child's cycling habits. As role models, you should know the rules of bicycle safety. Here are some tips on bicycle safety that you can use to help educate yourself and your child.

Starting Out _____

- ❖ **Selecting your helmet:** Wearing a helmet while bicycling is the law for children and youth under 18 years of age. When choosing a helmet, it is important to try many on before selecting one. Helmets come in many models and colors, all fitting differently.
 - Helmets range in price from \$15 to \$90.
 - Helmets can be purchased at most department stores, sport stores and specialty shops.
 - Ensure that the helmet you choose is approved by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), the Snell Memorial Foundation (SNELL), ASTM or the Consumer Product Safety Council (CPSC). Helmets should have a certification sticker on them.
 - Avoid buying used helmets. Damage to helmets may not always be visible. **Following a single impact, helmets should be replaced.**

- ❖ **Fitting your helmet:** Helmets must fit properly in order to work effectively. A helmet that does not fit can be dangerous!
 - Read and follow the helmet manufacturer's instructions for proper fit.
 - The helmet should sit level on the head and be two-finger widths above the eyebrow.
 - Choose a comfortable fit. You should NOT be able to fit a finger between your child's head and the helmet.
 - Adjust the helmet straps. The side straps should lie flat and meet in a V-shape under each ear. The chin strap should fit snug under the chin. When the mouth is closed you should be able to fit only one finger between the chin and strap.
 - Test the fit. Have your child shake his or her head with the helmet unstrapped. The helmet should stay in place. If the helmet moves, insert foam padding (fitting pads come with the helmet).

- ❖ **Making your bike legal:** There are several items that a bicycle must be equipped according to the law. Otherwise a ticket could be issued!
 - Your bicycle must be equipped with a bell or horn in good working order.
 - Your bicycle must be equipped with white reflective tape on the front forks and red reflective tape on the rear forks.
 - Your bicycle must have a white front light and a rear light or reflector if you ride between ½ hour before sunset and ½ hour after sunrise.

Common Cycling Dangers and How to Prevent Them

Driveways: Very often, children are hit by cars when riding out from their driveway. This can occur because your driveway may be hidden from passing motorists by obstructions such as trees or bushes.

What can I teach my child to prevent this?

- Stop and look before entering the street.
- Look left, then right for traffic.
- If there is NO traffic, proceed into the roadway.

Running stop signs: Frequently, collisions occur because of cyclists riding through stop signs. Often the rider just does not see the sign or was distracted. Running stop signs can be very dangerous.

What can I teach my child to prevent this?

- Stop at ALL stop signs!
- Always look both ways for traffic.
- Only proceed when traffic is clear and when it is safe.



Turning without warning: Collisions happen when cyclists make sudden turns. This can cause serious injuries to the cyclist and other road users.

What can I teach my child to prevent this?

- Children should walk their bikes across all streets.
- Always look and signal before turning.
- Looking back while riding takes practice. Practice with your child in an area where there is no traffic around.

Riding at night: Cycling collisions frequently happen when it is dark and difficult to see.

What can I teach my child to prevent this?

- Do not allow young children to ride at night.
- Have a plan in place for you and your child in case it is dark before your child rides home.
- Use a headlight on your bicycle if riding at night.
- Ensure the bicycle has reflectors on it – it's the law!

Riding in a group: Children often ride in pairs or large groups. Many collisions take place when children are following each other. If the leader runs a stop sign, the followers are placed at risk of getting hit by a vehicle.

What can I teach my child to prevent this?

- Encourage your child to make smart cycling choices by teaching him or her the rules of the road.
- Remember, all cyclists must stop at all stop signs.

***Remember - leading by example is the best lesson.
Always practice what you teach!***