

RIDE ON!

BIKEOLOGY

PARENT SECTION
WHAT EVERY PARENT
SHOULD KNOW



American Alliance for
Health, Physical Education,
Recreation and Dance

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DISCLAIMER

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THE BIKEOLOGY COURSE

Your child is taking a bicycling course and is learning to apply knowledge and skills to be a safer bicyclist. Here is what you can do to help:

Be knowledgeable yourself — read about what your child is learning.

- Review take-home materials so you are “in the know” on helmet fit, bicycle fit, safety checks, rules of the road and other important topics for safe bicycling.
- Make sure what you think you know is correct.

Reinforce traffic-safety behaviors and keep the lines of communication open.

- Discuss with your child what you see; talk about safe and unsafe bicyclist behaviors that could affect their safety and increase their chances of getting hurt. Discuss why and what bicyclists should do differently to be safer.
- Discuss with your child what you see; talk about safe and unsafe motorist behaviors that could affect the safety of bicyclists. Discuss why and what drivers should do differently to be safer.

Be a “Roll” Model for safe behavior — ride and drive safely around all traffic.

- It’s not enough to tell your child what to do, especially when your behavior is different. Your child learns and follows your actions. For more information on being a “Roll” Model, see: www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Bicycles/Be+a+Roll+Model.
- Wear your bicycle helmet every time you get on your bicycle. A helmet should fit level on the head and low on the forehead, sit securely on the head and be buckled. For more information on bicycle helmet fit, see: *Wear a Helmet*: www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8010-wear_a_helmet.pdf or *Fit a Helmet*: www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8019_Fitting-A-Helmet.pdf
- Follow the rules of the road when riding a bicycle or driving a car; the traffic rules are the same.
- Be courteous, respectful and “Share the Road” with other road users. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
- Avoid honking at a bicyclist; honking does not show courtesy and it can be dangerous. Honking can frighten a bicyclist and cause him/her to crash.



How Can I Support My Child's Learning?



Take advantage of free materials and local bicycle experts. Just about every state and metropolitan area has a bicycle club or coalition. These groups offer classes and other community activities. Check your local bike shops for classes, materials or free advice.

Lead by example. Go out for a ride with your child and reinforce safe riding behaviors through your actions and experience. Let your child see positive, non-risky behaviors.



BICYCLE HELMETS

A properly fitted bicycle helmet is the single most effective piece of equipment to reduce the risk of head injuries in the event of a crash. Since a head injury is the leading cause of death in bicycle crashes for all bicyclists — young, old or experienced — parents and children should wear a properly fitted bicycle helmet every ride.

BUY THE RIGHT HELMET

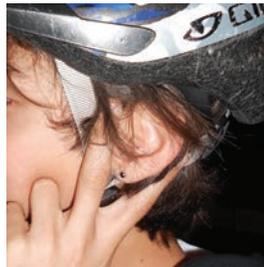
- A helmet must be worn each ride, fit correctly and be worn correctly to protect the brain from injury in the event of a crash.
- Buy a helmet designed for bicycling; either a bicycle helmet or a multi-use helmet that says it can be used for bicycling.
- Helmets can be purchased at retail stores and bicycle shops. Price differences are a result of greater fitting options, more vents, colors, and additional certifications beyond the minimum safety standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).
- Less expensive helmets do provide effective protection. The key to maximum helmet protection is proper fit. For more information on bicycle helmet types, recalls or laws, see the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute at: www.helmets.org.
- Allow your children to pick out their own helmets and decorate however they want. If they like the helmet, they will be more likely to wear it.

MAKE SURE THE HELMET FITS

- Your child was taught to follow the **2-2-2 Bicycle Helmet Rule**, to make sure his/her bicycle helmet fits properly:



The helmet should sit level on your head, **2 finger** widths above your eyebrow. If you look up with your eyes, you will see the edge of the helmet.



The straps should be snug and form the shape of a “v” with **2 fingers** below your earlobe.



The chinstrap should be snug, allowing no more than **2 fingers** to fit between your chin and the strap.

- The helmet should not move on the head in any direction.
- The visual view of how your child was taught to fit a helmet is shown on the previous page. For the complete National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) handout, see: www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8010-wear_a_helmet.pdf.

HOW THE BICYCLE HELMET PROTECTS THE BRAIN

The helmet has three main parts: straps, shell and liner.

- The straps keep the helmet in place while riding and during a crash.
- The smooth shell slides on rough pavement to lessen the chance of jerking the neck in the event of a crash.
- The liner is made of foam that reduces the impact on the head and brain by absorbing the shock.

WHEN TO REPLACE A HELME

- Your child was taught “**Crash and Trash**” or “**One and Done.**” This means if your child falls and hits his head, replace the helmet.
- If there is any damage to the bicycle helmet, it will no longer be able to do its job to protect the head and brain if your child falls and hits his head.
- Buy a new bicycle helmet. You can’t always see slight damage or cracks to a helmet, so buying a bicycle helmet at a yard sale is discouraged.
- For more information on when to replace a bicycle helmet, see the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute at www.bhsi.org.

How Can I Support My Child’s Learning?

- **Establish the bicycle helmet habit early and be consistent.** No helmet, no bicycle. Thank your child for wearing his/her bicycle helmet.
- **Be a “Roll” Model.** Children watch your behavior and are likely to follow your lead. As your child matures, he/she is more likely to reject what you tell him/her if you do not follow the behavior yourself. Children are more likely to maintain safe behaviors when you lead by example.
- **Have your child teach you how to fit a bicycle helmet properly.** See http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8010-wear_a_helmet.pdf.
- **Ask your child about peer pressure and fears of teasing by peers for wearing a bicycle helmet.** Role-play to enhance his/her self-confidence to stand up for themselves if the situation arises.
- **Help your child be an ambassador for safe bicycling** by having him/her encourage other family members and friends to do the right thing and wear a bicycle helmet every ride.
- **Reinforce that helmets are for everyone,** young and old, experienced riders as well as inexperienced. Just as it is important to wear a seat belt when in a car, regardless of your driving experience, a bicycle helmet should always be a part of the gear.





PREVENTING BICYCLE CRASHES & BRAIN INJURIES

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), emergency department visits for traumatic brain injuries (TBI) related to sports and recreation activities for children and adolescents increased by 60 percent during the past decade. Bicycling, football, playground activities, basketball and soccer are the activities that most frequently send children to emergency rooms (www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/facts.html). Regardless of age or riding skill, bicycling has some risks. Road hazards like wet pavement, speed bumps, gravel, sand, potholes and leaves can increase the risk of a crash. Riding bicycles with other moving traffic also increases the risk of a crash. While the best approach is to prevent a crash, wearing protective gear will reduce the chance of a brain injury in a crash.

YOU AND YOUR CHILD CAN PREVENT A CRASH BY:

- Keeping your bicycles in safe working order.
- Learning to ride safely.
- Maintaining control of your bicycle.
- Staying alert.
- Being visible (wearing bright colors, reflective wear, reflectors and lights).
- Following the rules of the road and avoiding others whose actions might affect your safety.

YOU AND YOUR CHILD CAN PREVENT A BRAIN INJURY BY:

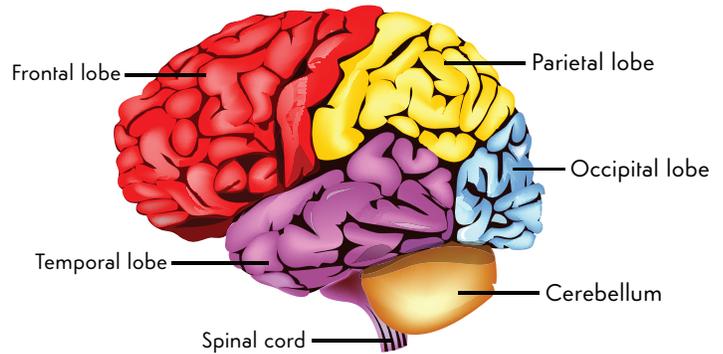
- Wearing a properly fitted bicycle helmet every ride.
- Understanding that even the most skilled adult bicyclists wear a helmet because crashes can happen; a bicycle helmet is worn level on the head and low on the forehead, and is buckled in the best way to protect the brain in the event of a crash.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BICYCLE HELMET FIT, SEE:

- *Wear a Helmet* www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8010-wear_a_helmet.pdf
or
- *Fit a Helmet* www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8019_Fitting-A-Helmet.pdf

BRAIN INJURIES AND CONCUSSIONS

- A concussion is one kind of TBI, caused by a bump, blow, jolt to the head, or from a fall. Concussions can change the way your brain normally works.
- Health care professionals may describe a concussion as a 'mild' brain injury because concussions are usually not life-threatening and most people recover quickly. Even so, their effects can be serious and a number of repeated small blows to the head may accumulate over time, leading to problems later.
- Some of the symptoms of a concussion appear right away, while others may not appear for days or months after the injury. Sometimes, people do not know they are having problems or how to tell you what is wrong. Older children may not want to tell you there is a problem because they are having fun or do not want to be teased by their peers for "complaining."



For an overview of the functions of the different lobes of the brain, in both English and Spanish, see: <http://neuroskills.com/brain-injury/brain-function.php>

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU SUSPECT A CONCUSSION

- Have your child stop the activity and take him/her to a medical provider for evaluation.
- Seek immediate help from a health care professional or emergency department if any of the following danger signs appear after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body:
 - Headache that gets worse and does not go away
 - Weakness, numbness, decreased coordination or loss of balance
 - Repeated vomiting or nausea
 - Slurred speech
 - Appears very drowsy or cannot be awakened
 - One pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) is larger than the other
 - Convulsions or seizures
 - Unable to recognize people or places
 - Increased confusion, restlessness or agitation
 - Strange or unusual behavior
 - Loss of consciousness. Any brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously and the individual should be carefully monitored.
- For more information, see: www.cdc.gov/concussion/signs_symptoms.html

How Can I Support My Child's Learning?

- **Reinforce wearing a bicycle helmet every ride.** The bicycle helmet should sit securely on the head, fit level on the head and low on the forehead, and be buckled.
- **For an interactive activity** to do with your child and their friends, show how bicycle helmets are effective in protecting their brain. Choose one of the three demonstrations in the step-by-step guide www.nhtsa.gov/DOT/NHTSA/Traffic%20Injury%20Control/Articles/Associated%20Files/811110.pdf
- **Observe and discuss safe and unsafe bicyclist behaviors** when you are out riding or driving.
- **Observe and discuss safe and unsafe motorist behaviors** around bicyclists when you are out riding or driving.
- **Be a “Roll” Model while driving around bicyclists.** With your children in the car, talk about your driving behavior by saying, *“There’s a bicyclist ahead. I’m going to slow down, and pass her when it’s safe. There’s no traffic, so it is safe to pass. I’m going to give the bicyclist about an arm’s length of space when I pass.”*
- **For more information on being a “Roll” Model,** see www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Bicycles/Be+a+Roll+Model
- **Take a bicycling class to increase your and your child’s skill.** Becoming more skilled at controlling your bicycle can help reduce some of your risks of falls.





CHOOSING THE RIGHT BICYCLE

Purchase a bicycle based on the size of your child now, not one he/she can “grow into.”

CHOOSE THE RIGHT SIZE

- Fit the bicycle to the rider. A bicycle that is too large is harder for your child to control, which increases his/her risk of a fall. Buy a bicycle for your child’s present size and skill level.
- **Size** Your child should be able to straddle the top tube with both feet on the ground. Allow 1-2 inches of space between the rider and the top tube, and 3-4 inches of space if buying a bicycle for mountain or off-road biking.
- **Skill** For beginning riders, the feet should sit flat on the ground when seated on the bicycle. With more experience and skill, the balls of the feet can touch the ground while seated, rather than the entire foot.
- Adjust the reach of the handlebars so it’s easy for your child to grip them while sitting upright on the bicycle.
- Adjust the seat height as your child grows.
- Check with a local bike shop if you are unsure whether your child’s bicycle fits correctly.

CHOOSE COASTER (PEDAL) BRAKES OVER HAND BRAKES

- Most young or small children lack the hand size or strength to squeeze the handbrakes, making pedal brakes a better choice.
- Using handbrakes requires more understanding and skill to safely stop, and is better suited for when riders are more comfortable and skilled in balance, riding in a straight line and stopping.

TRAINING WHEELS

- Start with both training wheels on the ground and gradually move them up.
- If your child is unwilling to give up the training wheels, raise the wheels so they do not touch the ground.
- Check out balance bikes (small bikes with no pedals) to help teach balance on a bicycle.

TYPES OF BICYCLES

Bicycling is something the whole family can do together, and riding the proper-size bicycle is just as important for the safety of parents as it is for children. Selecting the type of bicycle best for the type of riding will also make this activity more fun and comfortable for every rider. Many types are available for pre-teens, teens and adults.



Road or Touring bikes: Designed for longer-distance riding or for transportation. They typically have downturned handlebars, narrow tires, multiple gears, integrated brakes and shifters, and a lightweight frame. These bikes are common among commuters, especially in a city.



Mountain bikes: Designed for use on different types of trail surfaces such as sand, mud, gravel and off-road conditions. These bikes are typically heavier, have a high number of gears and a front-, rear- or dual-suspension system (shocks) to deal with terrain. Wide, knobby tires, a strong frame and an upright seat make them durable and comfortable to ride. Mountain bikes are common among students and commuters.



Hybrid bikes: A cross between a road bike and a mountain bike. These bikes typically have straight handlebars, hand brakes, gears and tires with a thickness somewhere between a mountain and road bike. Most beginners prefer this type of bike. A hybrid is comfortable for smoother surfaces, such as neighborhood or trail rides.



BMX bikes: Used for trick riding and racing. They usually have smaller-sized frames, one gear and only a rear hand brake. Dirt-jumping requires safety gear including full-face helmet, shin pads and gloves. Riders — especially beginners — should consider elbow pads, knee pads and wrist guards. Not all bikes are strong enough to jump, so check with your local bike shop. Teach children not to ride other passengers on the “pegs” of the bike. Elementary school-age children enjoy bicycling on a BMX-style bike because of the smaller frame sizes.



Tandem bikes: “A bicycle built for two.” This bike makes it legal for two people to ride on one bike. It has two seats, two pairs of handlebars, two sets of pedals, but only one set of gears and brakes. Tandems require both riders to ride in harmony with each other, necessitating plenty of practice and a high level of trust.



Recumbent bikes: Allows a rider to “sit down” and pedal, with the handlebars mounted up front or down near the cyclist’s hips. Some models have three wheels. This type of bike is gaining popularity, especially among adult cyclists. Many clubs have formed just for recumbent riders.



Three-Wheeler bikes: Can be a child’s tricycle or a larger three-wheeler used by people with disabilities or seniors. They have more stability for riders who want or need more help with balance.

Boy



Girl



Male versus Female bikes: Refers to the bicycle frame but can be ridden by anyone based on preference. Bikes with a straight top tube are usually classified as “boy’s” bicycle. A “girl’s” bike has a sloping top tube.

How Can I Support My Child's Learning?

- **Ride with your child at home** to reinforce balance and safety skills.
- **Reinforce bicycle helmet use every ride.** The bicycle helmet should fit level on the head and low on the forehead, sit securely on the head and be buckled. For more information on bicycle helmet fit, see:
Wear a Helmet — www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8010-wear_a_helmet.pdf or
Fit a Helmet — www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8019_Fitting-A-Helmet.pdf
- **Be a “Roll” Model for children.** Wear a bicycle helmet every ride and follow the rules of the road. For more information, see:
www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Bicycles/Be+a+Roll+Model
- **Be a “Roll” Model while driving around bicyclists.** With your children in the car, talk about your driving behavior. For example, you might say, *“Look, there’s a bicyclist ahead. I’m going to slow down and pass him when it’s safe. It’s safe to pass when there is no traffic coming. As I pass, I’m going to make sure there is about an arm’s length of space between our car and the bicyclist.”*
- **Repeat, repeat, repeat the rules of the road** with your child, including riding in the same direction as traffic and obeying traffic signs and signals. Better yet, rather than lecture, go out for a ride with your child and reinforce through your actions. Let your child see you do what you are asking him/her to do.
- **Ride or walk with your child** so you know the trails, path or roads he/she will be riding.
- **Set specific boundaries** for where your child may and may not ride.
- **Observe and discuss safe and unsafe bicyclist behaviors** when you are out riding or driving.





BICYCLES & BASIC TRAFFIC SAFETY

Many people think of bicycles as toys; but, by law, they are vehicles when in the roadway. Parents can play an important role in teaching and reinforcing with their child—at any age—how a bicycle relates to traffic. This discussion should continue through the years, as children can more fully understand the rules of the road, themselves in relation to traffic and the similarities to bicycling and driving a car. Even though your child may not fully understand the complexity of what you are saying, you are preparing him/her for when they will riding in neighborhood streets without you and helping to form a habit over time. Say such things as:

- *Are any cars coming? Let's look left, right and left. No cars? Okay, we can go.*
- *Stop, there's a car. We have to stop when we see a car.*
- *Ride on the right side of the road, just like a car.*
- *See that trash (pothole, cracked sidewalk, drainage grate) ahead of us? We need to go around it.*
- *Your shoes are untied. Pull over and tie them so the laces won't get caught in your chain or pedals.*

Follow the Rules of the Road — children and others should:

- Stop before entering the road from a driveway, path or alley. Look left-right-left for traffic and go when it is clear.
- Ride on the right, in the same direction as cars.
- Obey traffic signs and signals.
- Use hand signals when turning and stopping.
- Ride one person per seat. It is not okay to ride someone on your handlebars or on your pegs.
- Yield to pedestrians crossing in crosswalks or intersections.

Be Alert — children and others should:

- Watch for pedestrians, bicyclists and cars.
- Avoid riding in a motorist's blind spot (the area around a car where a driver cannot see others in the side or rear-view mirrors).
- Look ahead to avoid potholes, manholes, storm drains, rocks, sand and other hazards that could cause a fall.

- Listen and watch for traffic; do not wear or use electronic devices while bicycling.
- Keep two hands on the handlebars except when signaling. Use a basket, backpack or rack to carry items.

See and Be Seen — children and others should:

- Wear bright clothes to attract the attention of drivers during the day, and use reflective materials and lights and reflectors in low-light conditions and at night.
- Avoid riding at night if possible. If you must ride, the law in all states requires bicyclists to use a white front light and red rear light or reflector on your helmet, clothes or bicycle.
- Make eye contact with car drivers, pedestrians and other bicyclists when crossing or changing your position.

When Should My Child Be Allowed to Ride With Traffic?

- If your child is under age 10, he/she should not ride alone because children that age lack the experience to negotiate traffic without a parent or older caregiver's close supervision.
- If your child is over age 10, he/she can ride in traffic after proving that he/she has the skills to ride safely, follow the rules of the road and feel comfortable and confident riding in traffic.

Where Should I Allow My Child to Ride?

- Riding in traffic is challenging, regardless of age. Children are encouraged to ride in areas away from traffic like trails or parks. If they do ride in traffic, limit to neighborhood streets, or roads with slower-moving traffic. For more information, see: www.nhtsa.gov/DOT/NHTSA/NTI/SRTS/7505-10-ChooseSafeRoutes.pdf
- Older children with more riding experience should limit their riding to roads with little traffic and slower speeds, like neighborhood streets, streets closed off to traffic on the weekend or streets with designated bike lanes.
- Although it may seem safer to ride on a sidewalk, it is not without risks.
 - Sidewalks are for pedestrians, not bicyclists.
 - Drivers do not expect faster-moving traffic on sidewalks and can pull out or into a driveway without looking for a bicyclist on a sidewalk.
 - Drivers turning do not look for faster-moving traffic like a bicyclist preparing to cross in a crosswalk.
 - Sidewalks with many driveways are not a safe riding path for a bicyclist of any age.
- For more information about sidewalk riding, see:
 - *Bicycle Safety: Tips for Adults, Parents, Caregivers and Kids* at: www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8024b_ParentTips.pdf or
 - *Bicycle Safety: Tips for Youth* at: www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8024a_YouthTips.pdf

How Can I Support My Child's Learning?

- **Talk with your child about the rules of the road** when walking, bicycling or driving. Allow your child to see how you follow the rules of the road.
- **When you and your child see other bicyclists** on the road, discuss how they are, or are not, following the rules of the road.
- **Talk with your child about safer choices for where to ride**, like neighborhood streets or bike paths or in a park.
- **No matter where your child rides, it is always safer to ride with others**, during daylight hours, and to wear bright colors to increase the likelihood that drivers will see your child.
- **Ride on the right and pass slower-moving traffic on the left.**
Announce, "Passing on your left, or "On your left" when passing on a sidewalk or path.
- **Be a "Roll" Model for your children** by obeying the rules of the road when in the car, on a bicycle or on foot.





BE A BICYCLE SAFETY "ROLL" MODEL

When you roll, whether on a bicycle or in a car, children watch you. Not only do they watch you, they often repeat the behaviors they observe.



BEING A "ROLL" MODEL MEANS:

- **Riding and Driving Focused** — Never distracted.
- **Riding and Driving Prepared** — Always expect the unexpected.
- **Putting Safety First** — We never know when a crash will occur; so, regardless of skill level or age, always wear a bicycle helmet when on a bicycle and a seat belt when in a car.
- **Following the Rules of the Road** — A bicycle is considered a vehicle on the road; a bicyclist is the operator or driver of a vehicle with all the same rights and responsibilities of motorized traffic.
- **Sharing the Road** — All vehicle drivers (motorists and bicyclists) should look out for one another and show mutual respect for the sake of safety.

How Can I Support My Child's Learning?

- **Point out good behaviors and not-so-good behaviors of other road users** when you are walking, bicycling or driving with your children. Some good behaviors include bicyclists riding on the right, traveling in the same direction as traffic; bicyclists stopping at traffic signs or signals; motorists waiting to make a turn until the bicyclist passes. Some not-so-good behaviors include using a cell phone or texting while driving, bicycling or crossing the street; riding a bicycle in the wrong direction; and not wearing a bicycle helmet.
- **Be a "Roll" Model:** Children watch your behavior and are likely to follow your lead. They watch how you bicycle and they watch how you drive your car. As they mature, they are more likely to follow what you do and not what you say.
- **Encourage your child to be a "Roll" Model** for peers and for younger children.
- **Encourage and support a community-based "Roll" model campaign** for adults and children. For more information, see: www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Bicycles/Be+a+Roll+Model.



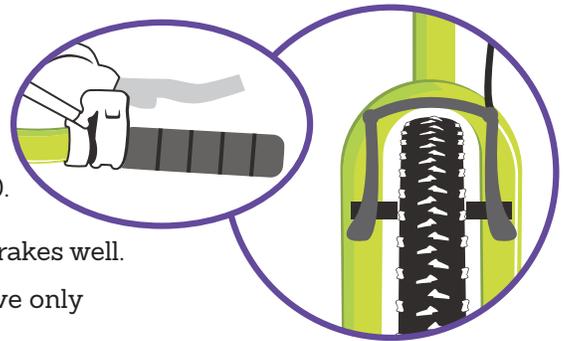
LEARNING TO BRAKE

After balancing on a bicycle, learning to stop safely is among the top skills to learn. Riders who can brake in a controlled manner are better prepared to handle just about any situation they may encounter while riding.

TYPES OF BRAKES

Bicycles have either coaster brakes or hand brakes.

- Children's bicycles usually have coaster brakes that work by back pedaling (pedaling in reverse). They are a better choice for young children who don't have the hand size or strength to use hand brakes well.
- Bicycles for older children and adults tend to have only hand brakes.
- When riders switch from pedal brakes to hand brakes, they sometimes forget and back pedal first instead of using the hand brake. Two ways to make it easier for them to adjust is:
 1. Start out with a bicycle with a coaster brake and a hand brake.
 2. Practice riding in areas with less traffic, such as a playground.



USING THE REAR OR THE FRONT HAND BRAKES

Learning the skill of controlled braking can prevent some crashes and injuries.

- **Rear Brake:** Your child was taught “**Right is Rear.**”
 - Squeezing the **right** hand brake engages only the **rear brake** and gradually slows the rear wheel. If the brake is squeezed too hard, the bicycle may skid to a stop.
 - The rear brake allows for more gradual braking.
 - Teachers recommend using the rear brake as the first step in learning how to make a controlled stop.
- **Front Brake:** Your child was taught “**Left is Front.**”
 - Squeezing only the **left** hand brake engages the **front brake** and slows the front wheel. The bicycle stops quickly, but the rear wheel continues to roll and may come off the ground.
 - Using the left brake only is not a safe way to stop for a beginning rider.
 - The front brake, because of the extra stopping power it offers, is often used in emergency braking by those more skilled in riding.

- **Applying both brakes at the same time** slows both wheels at the same time. The bicycle will stop while keeping the rear tire on the ground.
- Squeezing both brakes at the same time stops the bicycle quickly and safely.
- Squeeze the rear brake and, at the same time or just slightly later, gently squeeze (or finesse) the front brake. Ask your child to show you what it means to 'finesse' the brake.

How Can I Support My Child's Learning?

- **Review the feel of braking** by walking alongside a bicycle with your child and squeezing the rear brake, then the front brake, and then both brakes together.
- **Ride with your child** to reinforce what he/she learned in class.
- Encourage your child to use the brakes to slow or stop, rather than his/her feet, as young children often do.
- **Reinforce bicycle helmet use every ride.** The bicycle helmet should fit level on the head and low on the forehead, sit securely on the head and be buckled. For more information on bicycle helmet fit, see: *Wear a Helmet* www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8010-wear_a_helmet.pdf or *Fit a Helmet* www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8019_Fitting-A-Helmet.pdf.
- **Be a "Roll" Model for all children.** Wear a bicycle helmet every ride and follow the rules of the road. For more information on being a "Roll" Model, see: www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Bicycles/Be+a+Roll+Model.
- **Be a "Roll" Model while driving near bicyclists.** With your children in the car, talk about your driving behavior. For example, *"I see a bicyclist ahead, so I'm going to slow down and pass her when it's safe. I'm going to pass when there is no traffic and I'm going to give the bicyclist about an arm's length of space when I pass."*
- **Repeat, repeat, repeat the rules of the road** with your child, including riding in the same direction as traffic, and obeying traffic signs and signals. Go for a ride with your child to reinforce safe riding through your actions. Let your child see you do what you are asking him/her to do.
- **Ride or walk with your child** so you know the routes he/she uses.
- **Set specific boundaries** for where your child may and may not ride.
- When you are out riding or driving, **observe and discuss safe and unsafe bicyclist behaviors.**





MOTORISTS & BICYCLISTS: SHARE THE ROAD

Bicycling is one of the most efficient, cleanest and healthiest means of transportation. More people of all types and ages — from athletes to everyday folks — are choosing to bicycle for various reasons. Some choose bicycling because of high gas prices, others because of concerns about traffic or the environment. Others choose to ride their bicycles to work or school for exercise, weight loss, family fun or the simple joy of the sport of cycling. Some choose to ride bicycles because they do not drive.

Whether you are bicycling or driving a car, please be cautious. Use common sense and be courteous to one another for the sake of safety. Share the Road: Same Roads; Same Rules; Same Rights.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Bicycles are vehicles on the road, and you are a vehicle operator. Obey all traffic laws, traffic signs and signals. | Watch for bicyclists in traffic; they have a right under the law to ride on the roadway unless posted otherwise. |
| Ride in the same direction as traffic, and signal all turns. Stay as far to the right as safely possible. When approaching an intersection, position yourself so that you are visible. Stay out of drivers' blind spots (area around a car a driver cannot see others through either the side or rear-view mirrors). | Be cautious and patient around bicyclists. While bicyclists should ride as far right in the lane as safely possible, they may have to move further into the lane to avoid debris, car doors, to make turns, to be more visible, or because of narrow traffic lanes. |
| Scan ahead for obstacles in the roadway and learn to avoid them without swerving into traffic. Watch out for opening car doors; ride an arm's length away from parked cars on the street. | Avoid blowing your horn, unless critical. Horns startle bicyclists and can cause them to swerve into traffic or crash. |
| Be visible. Wear brightly colored or reflective clothing. If you choose to bike at night, use a white front light and red rear light or reflector, as required by law in all states. | Look for bicyclists along the roadway, especially at intersections. Slow down and allow at least three feet between you and the bicyclist when passing. |
| Wear a properly fitted bicycle helmet every ride. | Look for bicyclists before opening your car door, backing out of a parking space, before making a turn or when coming out of driveway or alley. |
| Learn more about how to ride on the road safely; visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) at www.nhtsa.gov/Bicycles . | Learn more about sharing the road with bicyclists; visit the League of American Bicyclists at www.bikeleague.org/action/sharetheroad.php , http://exchange.aaa.com/safety/bicycle-safety/ or do a search for "share the road" + your local bicycle coalition. |

How Can I Support My Child's Learning?

- **Be a “Roll” model.** Children watch your behavior and are more likely to follow your lead. They watch how you bicycle and they watch how you drive your car around bicyclists. As they mature, they are more likely to follow what you do and not what you say.
- Top things to model: **wearing a bicycle helmet** — every time; **staying focused** — put down the electronic devices; **following the rules of the road** as a motorist and bicyclist; passing bicyclists with care; and being courteous to other road users.





DISTRACTED DRIVING, WALKING & BICYCLING

Distraction around traffic poses a safety risk for everyone on the road, whether you are driving, bicycling or walking. Follow the tips for managing the 10 most common distractions for pedestrians, bicyclist and drivers.

KEEP THOSE IN YOUR CARE SAFE

When you need to address situations in the car with your children, other passengers or pets, pull over to a safe location and turn off the motor. Do the same with children you are carrying on your bicycle, pulling in a trailer or who are bicycling with you. Pull off the roadway so you can devote your full attention to the matter at hand. Hold young children's hands when walking in parking lots and crossing the street. Always use your eyes and ears to focus on your surroundings.

TURN IT OFF

Turn off your phone or silence it before you begin to drive, ride or walk around traffic, so you won't hear the ring or incoming text message. Put away all electronic devices and take out the headphones and ear plugs so you can focus all your attention on the road. Take note if your state has a law against wearing headphones while bicycling.

SPREAD THE WORD

Set up a special message on your cell phone that sends callers or texters a message saying you will get back to them as soon as possible, or sign up for a service that offers this.

PULL OVER

If you need to connect with someone through an electronic device while driving or bicycling, pull over and out of traffic first. When you are walking, wait until you have a clear walkway ahead of you and you have finished crossing the street. Be alert while walking in parking lots or crossing a driveway while on a sidewalk.

USE YOUR PASSENGERS

Ask a passenger to make the call for you so your attention stays focused on driving. This does not apply when you are walking or bicycling.

X THE TEXT

Never text, surf the web or read your email while driving, bicycling or walking; it's dangerous. Pay attention to your surroundings, including traffic. Devote your full attention to one task at a time.

KNOW THE LAW

Some states and localities do not allow the use of handheld cell phones or electronic devices when driving (see www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html). Even with these laws, drivers do not always do what is lawful. Protect yourself by watching for those who are not giving their full attention to the road and you.

PREPARE

Program electronic devices for directions before you begin your trip and know the route you will take. If you need help when you are on the road, stop in a safe location to review the map or directions.

FOCUS ON THE TASK AT HAND

Do not participate in any activity that takes your hands off the wheel or handlebars, or your mind and eyes off the road when driving or bicycling. When walking, stay focused on road and traffic conditions, using your eyes and ears. Be wary in parking lots and when crossing driveways.

SECURE YOUR PETS

Pets can be a distraction in or around the car, so always secure them properly before starting to drive. Before you leave, secure your pets in your car, your house or your yard. Loose pets are a distraction and safety risk for those driving, walking or bicycling. When you are walking your pets, make sure they are on a leash so you have full control. Avoid walking or riding close to animals that are not leashed.

Adapted from “10 Tips for Managing the Most Common Distractions,” Governor’s Highway Safety Association (GHSA).

How Can I Support My Child’s Learning?

- **Be a “Roll” Model:** Children watch your behavior and are likely to follow your lead. They watch how you bicycle and they watch how you drive your car. As they get older, they are more likely to reject what you tell them if you do not follow the road safety behaviors yourself.

- **Top things to model in transportation related activities:**

- Wear a bicycle helmet and buckle up every time.
- Ride your bicycle in the same direction as traffic.
- Stay focused; don’t use electronic devices when driving, bicycling or walking around traffic.
- Follow the rules of the road, including obeying all traffic signs and signals.
- Obey the speed limit when driving and slow down when around bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Be courteous to all road users, drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.





DEFENSIVE WALKING & BICYCLING

Parents are encouraged to teach or reinforce defensive walking and bicycling. People spend years practicing defensive driving, anticipating what other drivers might do. Defensive walking and bicycling also requires thinking ahead, and means that you and your children:

1. Identify situations that expose you to a risk of being hit by traffic.
2. Adjust your behavior to decrease your risk as much as possible.

While the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists may require changes to the physical environment (sidewalks, separate bike lanes, traffic signals, or help from law enforcement to slow speeding traffic), there are things that you and your children can do to increase your safety around traffic and prevent a crash from happening in the first place.

- W** **B** Look for other traffic (pedestrians, bicyclists and cars) by scanning front, left, right and behind you.
- W** **B** Stay focused and alert when around traffic. Do not text, talk on the phone or listen to music. Keep your eyes and ears focused on the road and traffic around you.
- W** **B** Increase your visibility. Wear bright colors and reflective material on your clothes, backpack and bicycle. If you must walk or bicycle in low-light conditions or at night, use a white light in front and red light or reflector in the rear.
- W** **B** Expect that other road users will not see you. Make eye contact with motorists before crossing; if you are not sure they saw you, wait for them to pass.
- W** **B** Predict what other road users might do, like make a turn, pull out of a parking space or driveway, back up or change lanes. The sooner you know there might be a conflict, the more time you have to act.
- W** **B** Stop if you see a vehicle backing up. (Look for white back-up lights, exhaust from tailpipe, back-up beeps.) Make sure the driver sees you and stops before you continue.
- W** **B** Give drivers extra time to slow or stop, especially in poor weather (ice, snow, rain), and when it's hard to see (dusk, dawn, fog or night). You might be able to see others, but it doesn't mean they can see you.
- W** **B** Be ready to stop at driveways and intersections when walking or riding on a sidewalk. Drivers may not see you or be paying attention.

W Walking **B** Biking

- W** **B** Be aware of things that make it hard for traffic to see you, like bushes, branches or other traffic. When more than one lane of traffic is going in the same direction, one car can act as a “visual barrier” so that the driver in the next lane cannot see you. Stop at each edge and look before continuing to cross.
- W** **B** Look for traffic before crossing a street, driveway or alley. Look left, right, left again, and proceed only when clear.
- B** Scan and keep scanning while crossing a street, driveway or alley. Make eye contact or communicate with traffic as you cross. Even if you have the right of way, be prepared to get out of the way quickly if you think a driver doesn’t see you (doesn’t make eye contact, doesn’t slow down or doesn’t get out of the way).
- B** Expect drivers to pull out from side streets, alleys and driveways, to turn left or right in front of you, and to open car doors in your path. Give yourself at least an arm’s length from parked cars on the street.
- B** Pay attention, especially at intersections, driveways or alleys. Watch for a car’s turn signals, frequent braking, or drivers “looking” either right, left or behind, which may mean they are getting ready to turn or change lanes.
- B** Be prepared to stop or turn quickly to avoid a crash at intersecting streets. On-bicycle classes can teach these more-advanced skills to avoid crashes. Use extreme caution. Stop, scan or walk your bicycle through challenging intersections.
- B** Follow the pedestrian signs and signals if you are riding on a sidewalk and crossing the street.
- B** Avoid riding close to drivers who are weaving or not maintaining their position in a lane. They may be using electronic equipment or may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- B** Keep stunts and tricks off streets and roads. Just as race cars and stunt cars belong on racetracks, not on regular streets and highways, bicycle tricks should be practiced only on playgrounds, bike parks or other confined areas.

How Can I Support My Child’s Learning?

- **Point out safe and unsafe situations as you see them.** Explain defensive strategies you take when driving, walking or bicycling because of what you perceive to be happening or might happen.
- **With your children in the car, talk about your driving behavior.** For example, you might say, “There’s a person in that car ahead and he looks like he’s going to back out of that parking space. I’ll bet he doesn’t see me. I’d better slow down and be prepared to stop.”
- **Repeat, repeat, repeat the rules of the road** with your child, including riding in the same direction as traffic, and obeying traffic signs and signals. Go out for a ride with your child and reinforce through your actions. Let your child see you do what you are asking him/her to do.



BICYCLING ON MULTI-USE TRAILS

Riding on multi-use trails limits the dangers of being around cars, but introduces the challenges of sharing a path with pedestrians, runners, in-line skaters, dog walkers and sometimes, horses. When a bicyclist is riding on a road with cars, there are set rules of the road. While there are no set rules when using a multi-use trail, here are some suggested tips. Following these tips helps bicyclists and others to be courteous of one another and avoid injury risks.

BICYCLISTS SHOULD:

- Wear a bicycle helmet on every ride. Whether the path is paved, dirt, maintained or not, falls can happen. A properly fitted bicycle helmet is the best way to reduce the risk of a head injury in the event of a crash.
- Stay alert for people walking and running on the trail.
- Be predictable. Ride in a straight line, unless passing others.
- Pass other trail users on the left. Warn those behind by using a left turn signal, extending your left arm straight. Caution those in front that you want to pass by ringing your bike bell or saying out loud “Passing on your left,” or “On your left.”
- Use your ears to listen for others coming up behind you. Do not wear headphones or use electronic devices that can distract you and others.
- Use your eyes to look ahead to avoid hazards on the path that could cause you to crash, like rocks, sticks or fallen tree limbs.
- Keep both hands on the handlebars unless signaling. Use a basket, backpack or rack to carry items.
- Obey all posted signs, especially when crossing a roadway. Stop at the edge of the road and look left-right-left for traffic. Make sure all lanes of traffic stop before crossing the road.
- Avoid riding a bicycle at night, if possible. If you must ride at night, use white front lights and red rear lights or reflectors, as required by law in all states. Wear reflective materials on bicycles and clothes.
- Follow posted trail signs, including when preparing to cross roadway traffic.

How Can I Support My Child's Learning?

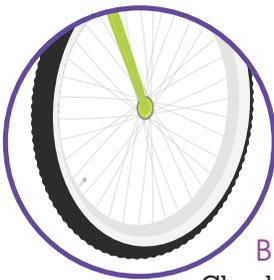
- **Go for a ride with your child on a trail** and practice following the multi-use trail tips. When you come across other bicyclists, discuss how they are or are not practicing good behavior on the trail.
- **Demonstrate**, how to be courteous to others while riding.
- **Be a "Roll" Model for safe behaviors**, whether on a bicycle or on foot by following the multi-use trail tips and posted signs along the trails and before crossing a road.





MAINTAINING A BICYCLE: ABC QUICK CHECK

It is important to keep you and your child's bicycle in safe working condition. Here are some tips — called ABC Quick Check — on what to check before each ride. It is a good idea to have a bicycle shop professional inspect and tune up your bicycles at least once a year, if your family rides often.

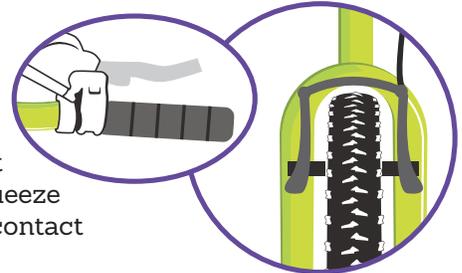


A IS FOR AIR

Check the air pressure, and add air if needed. Look for the correct pressure rating on the tire sidewall. Each tire should feel firm. Your child has been taught “hard as a rock.” Also, spin the tires to look for wear and other damage.

B IS FOR BRAKES

Check to make sure the brakes will stop the bicycle. For coaster brakes, spin the back wheel and apply the brake. For hand brakes, squeeze the levers to make sure they do not touch the handlebars. Lift one tire off the ground, spin it, and squeeze the brake lever. The brake pads should be clean, straight and contact the rims properly.



C IS FOR CRANKS, CHAIN AND CASSETTE

Try to wiggle the crank arms side to side. There should be no movement. Spin the pedals and cranks to see if the chain drives the rear wheel. The chain should not have any rust or built-up debris. If the bike has gears, check to make sure the gear levers and derailleurs (gear-changing mechanism) work to shift the chain between gears.



QUICK IS FOR THE QUICK RELEASE

Some bicycles have quick releases on the wheels and the seat post. This allows for quick removal of the wheels and the ability to raise or lower the seat for proper fit. Check to make sure they are tight, closed properly and facing in the correct direction.



CHECK IS FOR CHECK

After making sure the seat and handlebars are tight and at the proper height, have your child ride the bicycle in a safe environment away from traffic, such as around the parking lot or grassy field. Check that everything is working well and that your child is comfortable on the bicycle.

How Can I Support My Child's Learning?



- **Ride with your child** to reinforce what he or she has learned in class.
- **Perform and reinforce** the ABC Quick Check with your child before every ride.
- **Reinforce bicycle helmet use for every ride.** The helmet should sit level on the forehead, fit securely on the head and be buckled.
- **For more information on bicycle helmet fit, see:**
 - *Wear a Helmet* www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8010-wear_a_helmet.pdf
 - or
 - *Fit a Helmet* www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/bicycles/pdf/8019_Fitting-A-Helmet.pdf