

Lifestyle Tips



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Injury Prevention in Children's Outdoor Activities



When we use our bodies, we need to use our heads! As important as it is to get kids physically active, it's also important to make sure to get active safely. A key piece of safety equipment is a helmet. Wearing a helmet while doing activities such as bicycling, in-line

skating, scootering, skateboarding and skiing significantly reduces the risk of head injuries and death. Indeed, in many jurisdictions, it is the law for all cyclists under the age of 18 to wear a helmet. Helmets don't stop crashes or falls from happening, but they do help keep you safe if they do happen.

Choosing the right equipment can be hard when your children are involved in more than one activity—one size does

not fit all. Here are some things to keep in mind when choosing a helmet:

- There are different types of helmets made for different sports and activities. Your local sports store can help you choose the best protection—for example, skateboarders need a helmet which covers more of the back of the head.
- Make sure the helmet has a certification label to say that it meets safety standards. A certification label indicates that the helmet has been tested to withstand certain levels of impact, giving you the best protection. Certification should be from one of the following organizations:
 - CSA – Canadian Standards Association - <http://www.csa.ca/cm/home>
 - CPSC – Consumer Product Safety Commission (USA) - <http://www.cpsc.gov/>
 - Snell – Snell Helmet Safety Standards - <http://www.smf.org/stds.html>
 - ASTM – American Society for Testing and Materials - <http://www.astm.org/>



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- It is crucial that the helmet fits properly. The helmet should fit snugly and shouldn't slide from side-to-side or front to back. The side straps should fit in a snug "V" shape, right under the ear. The chin strap should be tightened until you can only fit one finger between the strap and the chin.

- Some helmets are intended for multiple impacts, like a hockey helmet, and some for single impacts, like a bicycle helmet. Always replace a single-impact helmet after any impact. There may not be any visible damage to the helmet, but impact crushes the foam so that the helmet is less protective. Helmets should also be replaced after five years, as the material naturally weakens over time.

injuries. Safe Kids Canada advances safety and reduces the burden of injuries to Canadian children. Their mandate is to turn research into action through credible programs and messages.

<http://www.safekidsCanada.ca/safekidsCanada/>



For information on how to properly choose and use the correct helmet click here.

For more information on keeping kids safe while participating in outdoor activities, check out the following sources:

ThinkFirst

ThinkFirst is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of brain and spinal cord injuries. ThinkFirst programs include Brain Day and Helmet Fitting Clinics to raise awareness of simple and effective ways to avoid devastating brain and spinal cord injuries.

<http://www.thinkfirst.ca/index.aspx>

Safe Kids Canada

Safe Kids Canada promotes effective strategies to prevent unintentional

