

# Columbus Youth Bicycle Helmet Law



*Bicycle crashes are a common reason Columbus children are treated at a hospital for injury. Bicycle helmets can lower the risk of brain injury by up to 88 percent. However, too few Columbus youth wear a helmet every time they ride. In July 2008, Columbus City Council passed a law requiring the use of helmets by all children younger than 18.*

## What Does the Law Mean?

- All kids and teens younger than 18 are required to wear a helmet while riding bicycles, scooters, in-line skates, roller-skates and skateboards in the city of Columbus.
- The helmet must fit the child's head and be buckled under the chin.
- A child not wearing a helmet may be given a warning or citation (ticket) by police. The ticket may carry a fine of up to \$25.

## When Will the Law Take Effect?

- Until July 2009, the police will provide education and warnings only. Beginning in July 2009, the police may enforce the law with a ticket.

## Where Can I Get a Helmet?

- Helmets cost as little as \$10 and can be found at stores throughout Columbus.
- Some community programs offer free or discounted helmets for families who cannot afford one.

## Bicycle Safety Tips

- Always wear a helmet.
- Ride with traffic. Stay to the right. Do not ride into traffic.
- Follow all traffic rules. Stop at red lights and stop signs.
- Use hand signals to let drivers know what you plan to do.
- Walk the bike across busy streets and intersections. Look left, right, and left again before crossing.
- Do not ride at dusk or after dark.
- Infants younger than one year should not be passengers on bicycles. Their neck muscles may not be strong enough to control head movement during a sudden stop.
- Children younger than 10 should ride on a sidewalk or bike path instead of in the street.
- Remove helmets before climbing on playground equipment or trees.

## Pick the Right Helmet

- Let your child help pick out a helmet that he or she likes. Choose a bright color to help drivers see your child.
- Look for the CPSC Certified label on the box.
- Try the helmet on your child. It should be snug, but not tight.
- If it feels too tight, try using thinner sizing pads. If it is still too tight, purchase a larger helmet.
- If your child is between 2 sizes, pick the bigger one. Most helmets come with extra pads to help you get a good fit.
- The helmet should not move from side to side when your child shakes his head.
- Replace any helmet that is damaged or that has been involved in a crash.

## Fit the Helmet Correctly

1. The helmet should sit flat on top the head and rest 1 or 2 finger-widths above the eyebrows. The forehead must be covered.
2. The straps should form a "V" below your child's ear.
3. The chin strap should be buckled snugly under the jaw. No more than 1 or 2 fingers should fit under the strap.

