

## KIDS ON WHEELS

Tricycle, bikes, skateboard, rollerblades, skates and micro-scooters are all popular with kids. However, they are potentially dangerous and account for a large number of hospital admissions each year. It is important to comply with NSW laws and product standards, and take appropriate precautions to reduce the risk of serious injury to your child.

### Tricycles



- Ensure the product is the right size for the child.
- Ensure that it is stable.
- Provide a safe area to use it – away from slopes, stairs and changes in level.

### Bicycles



#### Safe Bikes

Buy safe bicycles with **spoke guards** and **chain guards**. By law, the bike must have both front and rear lights and a rear reflector if riding at night.

#### Size

Most bicycle injuries are the result of the child losing control of the bike (about 85%) and falling off after crashing into a pole, curb or fence, so getting the right size is vitally important. A bike that is too big or too small is a safety hazard. How to check? Have your child sit on the bike. At least the toes should touch the ground on **both** sides

### Safety Devices

Parents should ensure that bikes are equipped with the following safety devices. Do regular spot checks to ensure they are still attached, are clean and working:

- Brakes
- Lights (AS 3562)
- Reflectors (AS 2142)
- Bell or horn
- Visibility devices (reflective tape, flags, etc).

### Bicycle Safety Checklist

- Brakes – ensure brake blocks are not worn down and are fitted correctly.
- Chain – should be frequently oiled and not be too loose.
- Tyres – look for bald spots, bulges and cuts. Should not “squash” when firmly squeezed.
- Pedals – must spin freely
- Bell or Horn – should be loud enough for others to hear.
- Lights – check batteries and globes.

### Be a Role Model

Set a good example when riding with your children. Make sure you use a helmet too.



### Riding the Bike

- All riders of bicycles are required by law to wear a Standards Australia approved **helmet**.



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- It is safest for young children to ride their bikes on footpaths or shared paths. Children under 12 - and older riders accompanying them - may ride a bicycle on the footpath unless specifically prohibited by signs. Riders must keep to the left and give way to pedestrians.
- Cyclists 12 year or over **cannot** use the footpath unless it is signposted as a shared footpath. Otherwise you must use roads or designated cycleways.
- Children should obey the rules of the road and know what each traffic sign means.
- Children should never make a turn without looking behind them. Teach them to make a shoulder check before they signal a turn.
- If there is traffic, a child should stop by the side of the road and wait for a gap before turning.
- Children on bikes should always give way to pedestrians.
- Teach children to walk their bikes when crossing the street, railway crossing or pedestrian crossing, and when it is safe to cross.

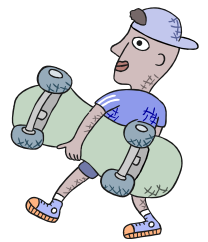
## Micro-Scooters



- Micro-scooters are also most commonly associated with fall injuries. A number also occur from collisions with vehicles and pedestrians.
- Two thirds of those injured are under 14 years.
- Look out for unsafe construction with sharp objects and mechanisms which are only finger tightened.
- Micro-scooters are very unstable due to the small wheels.

- Braking systems are considered inadequate at the speeds that can be generated.
- A licence is required before use on the road.
- Scooters may be ridden on the footpath by children under 12, unless specifically prohibited by a sign.
- Helmets should be worn, along with other safety equipment such as knee pads and elbow pads.

## Skateboards and Rollerblades



- The most common injuries result from falls, although there have been injuries and deaths associated with running into vehicles and pedestrians.
- Rollerblades need to be a comfortable, firm fit on the child's feet.
- Skateboards and Rollerblades may be used on the footpath regardless of the rider's age, unless specifically prohibited by signs.
- Riders of skateboards can only use minor roads (those with no lines marked) and can only do so between dawn and dusk.
- Helmets should be worn, along with other safety equipment such as knee pads and elbow pads.

## Protective Equipment

### Helmets



- Helmets are the most important piece of safety equipment and are intended to protect children's heads in the event of a fall.

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Helmets reduce the risk of brain injury by 40% to 90%

- To be effective, the helmet must *fit* properly. Involve the rider in buying the helmet. Make sure he/she is happy with the appearance.
- Don't just rely on stated helmet sizes. Not every helmet will fit snugly. Test the fit. Adjust the straps and do it up. It should sit straight on the head. Place the palm of your hand under the front of the helmet and push up and back. If the helmet easily moves around, it does not fit.
- Don't buy a helmet that is too big, so the child will grow into it. It will be too big to protect the child now.
- The helmet should feel comfortable and have a good airflow, particularly if you live in a warm climate.
- Look for the Australian Standards mark. These helmets have been tested and approved.
- Second-hand helmets may not be good value for money. It can be difficult to see damage to the foam lining. A damaged helmet will not protect the rider. With second-hand helmets you have little choice for comfort and fit.
- Parents must insist that the helmet is used every time.

## Knee and Elbow Guards

Designed to protect vulnerable points that research has shown are common points of contact in falls:

- Skateboarders** – commonly land on their knees.
- Rollerbladers** – land on knees and elbows.
- Scooter riders** - most prone to falls.

## Wrist Guards

- Designed to strengthen the wrist area so that a child breaking their fall by putting out their hand is less likely to damage or break the wrist.
- Wrist injuries are very common for skateboard, rollerblade, scooter and micro-scooter rides.



## Visibility

- Wheeled devices should not be used in poor light.
- Riders should wear bright coloured clothing or use a visibility vest, so they stand out and are easy to see by pedestrians and drivers of other vehicles.

Road authorities advise that child users of all wheeled toys should be accompanied by an adult until age 9 or 10 depending on the child's individual development

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