

The Child as Passenger on an Adult's Bicycle



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A young passenger on an adult's bike makes the bike unstable and increases the braking time. A mishap at any speed easily attained during casual riding could cause significant injury to the child. Following these guidelines decreases, but does not eliminate, the risk of injury.

Preferably, children should ride in a bicycle-towed child trailer.

1. Only adult cyclists should carry young passengers.
2. Preferably ride with passengers in parks, on bike paths, or on quiet streets. Avoid busy thoroughfares and bad weather, and ride with maximum caution and at a reduced speed.
3. Infants younger than 12 months are too young to sit in a rear bike seat and should not be carried on a bicycle. Do not carry infants in backpacks or frontpacks on a bike.
4. Children who are old enough (12 months to 4 years) to sit well unsupported and whose necks are strong enough to support a lightweight helmet may be carried in a child-trailer or rear-mounted seat.
5. A rear-mounted seat must
 - a. Be securely attached over the rear wheel
 - b. Have spoke guards to prevent feet and hands from being caught in the wheels
 - c. Have a high back and a sturdy shoulder harness and lap belt that will support a sleeping child
6. A lightweight infant bike helmet should always be worn by a young passenger to prevent or minimize head injury. Small styrofoam helmets that meet Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards are available.
7. The child must be strapped into the bike seat with a sturdy harness.
8. Remember, the risk of serious injury still exists when you carry a young child on your bicycle.

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From Your Doctor

The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on the individual facts and circumstances.

American Academy of Pediatrics

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Dear Parent:

Your child is old enough to learn how to prevent injuries. The picture below is designed to help him or her think about safety. Read the message with your child and talk about it. Then take this safety sheet home and post it where everyone can see it.

It takes time to form a safety habit. Remind each other about these safety messages. Make safety a big part of your lives.

Get Ahead on Bike Safety...Wear a Helmet!

