GET A HEADS UP ON SKI HELMET SAFETY

While there is no concussion-proof helmet, a ski helmet can help protect your child or teen from a serious brain or head injury. The information in this handout will help you learn what to look for and what to avoid when picking out a helmet for your child or teen.

HEADS UP CONCUSSION

START WITH THE RIGHT SIZE:

BRING THE SKIER
Bring your child or teen with you when buying a new helmet to make sure that you can check for a good fit.

HEAD SIZE
To find out the size of your child's or teen's head, wrap a soft tape measure around his or her head, just above their eyebrows and ears. Make sure the tape measure stays level from front to back. (If you don't have a soft tape measure, you can use a string and then measure it against a ruler.)

SIZES WILL VARY
Helmet sizes often will vary from brand-to-brand and with different models. Each helmet will fit differently, so it is important to check out the manufacturer's website for the helmet brand's fit instructions and sizing charts, as well as to find out what helmet size fits your child's or teen's head size.

GET A GOOD FIT:

GENERAL FIT
A ski helmet should fit snugly all around, with no spaces between the foam or padding and the snowboarder's head.

ASK
Ask your child or teen how the helmet feels on their head. While it needs to have a snug fit, a helmet that is too tight can cause headaches.

HAIRSTYLE
Your child or teen should try on the helmet with the hairstyle he or she will wear while skiing. Helmet fit can change if your child's or teen's hairstyle changes. For example, a long-haired skier who gets a very short haircut may need to adjust the fit of the helmet.

COVERAGE
A ski helmet should not sit too high or low on their head. To check, make sure the helmet sits low enough in the front to protect the skier's forehead, about 1 inch above the eyebrows, and the back of the helmet does not touch the top of the skier's neck.

ADJUSTMENTS
Some ski helmets have removable padding that can be adjusted to get a good fit.

GOGGLES
Have your child or teen try on the helmet with the goggles they will wear on the slopes. The helmet should fit snugly on top of the goggles, with no space between the helmet and the top of the goggles. However, the helmet should not sit so low on the snowboarder's head that it pushes down on the goggles.

VISION
Make sure that the skier can see straight forward and side-to-side.

CHIN STRAPS
The chin strap should be centered under the skier's chin and fit snugly, so that no more than one or two fingers fit between the chin and the strap. Tell your child or teen to open their mouth wide…big yawn! The helmet should pull down on their head. If not, the chin strap needs to be tighter. Once the chin strap is fastened, the helmet should not move in any direction, back-to-front or side-to-side.

TAKE CARE OF THE HELMET:

CHECK FOR DAMAGE
DO NOT allow your skier to use a cracked or broken helmet or a helmet that is missing any padding or parts.

CLEANING
Clean the helmet often inside and out with warm water and mild detergent. DO NOT soak any part of the helmet, put it close to high heat, or use strong cleaners.

PROTECT
DO NOT let anyone sit or lean on the helmet.

STORAGE
Do not store a ski helmet in a car. The helmet should be stored in a room that does not get too hot or too cold and where the helmet is away from direct sunlight.

DECORATION
DO NOT decorate (paint or put stickers on) the helmet without checking with the helmet manufacturer, as this may affect the safety of the helmet. This information may also be found on the instructions label or on the manufacturer's website.

LOOK FOR THE LABELS:

LOOK FOR A SKI HELMET WITH LABELS THAT:

- Have the date of manufacture. This information will be helpful in case the helmet is recalled; and
- Say ASTM[1] certified. That label means that the helmet has been tested for safety and meets safety standards.

WHEN TO REPLACE A SKI HELMET:

Ski helmets are designed to withstand more than one very minor hit. However, a ski helmet MUST be replaced if it has been involved in a serious crash or is damaged.

MULTI-USE HELMETS:

Some helmet companies have created multi-use helmets for biking, skateboarding, and other activities. Multi-use helmets are designed to withstand multiple very minor hits; however, a multi-use helmet MUST be replaced if it has been involved in a serious crash or is damaged. Before your child or teen uses a multi-use helmet for skiing, make sure the helmet has an ASTM label certifying it for skiing.

[1] American Society for Testing and Materials: www.astm.org

HEADS UP

JOIN THE CONVERSATION www.facebook.com/CDCHeadsUp

TO LEARN MORE GO TO >> WWW.CDC.GOV/TraumaticBrainInjury

Content Source: CDC's Heads Up Program. Created through a grant to the CDC Foundation from the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE®).