



PHAT promotes the use of helmets in all sports where head injury is a serious risk.

Its work is based on research proving helmets help prevent head injuries that can have devastating physical, emotional, and financial impacts on patients and families.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit [UVMHealth.org/InjuryPrevention](http://UVMHealth.org/InjuryPrevention)

#### INJURY PREVENTION

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#### INJURY PREVENTION



# PHAT

Protect Your Head at All Times



[UVMHealth.org/InjuryPrevention](http://UVMHealth.org/InjuryPrevention)

THE  
University of Vermont  
MEDICAL CENTER



Photo credit: NHTSA

# PHAT: Protect Your Head at All Times

## WHY HELMETS ARE IMPORTANT

Helmets can reduce your risk from a serious brain or head injury, such as a concussion or traumatic brain injury (TBI).

The catch? Helmets only work if they are used the right way. It's important to always use a helmet specifically designed for your activity. Each sport or activity has a helmet designed specifically for the injuries you are at risk for so you should never wear a bike helmet to play football or a skiing helmet to mountain climb.

## WHO SHOULD WEAR A HELMET?

Everyone taking part in an activity that puts you at increase risk for a head injury. Adults and children of all ages should wear a helmet when bike riding.

Studies have shown that when adults wear helmets, children are much more likely to wear their helmet when riding a bike.

As an adult, it is important to set a good example and ride PHAT every time you ride a bike.

## HOW TO PROPERLY FIT A BIKE HELMET

Here are the 3 steps to ensure your bike helmet is properly fitted for your head.

1. The helmet should rest on your head until the front edge extends down about an inch from the top of your eyebrows.
2. The helmet should fit snugly side to side and front to back. It should not slide around on your head or be able to remove without unbuckling the strap.
3. The strap should fit with no more than 1 finger able to fit between the strap and your chin.

If the helmet is too small or moves around side to side or front to back, it is time to purchase a new helmet that fits.



## HOW TO CLEAN A HELMET

To clean your helmet, use mild soaps like baby shampoo or a gentle laundry detergent. Do not soak your helmet in a sink or bucket of water. Instead use a warm wet towel to clean off any stuck on bugs or grime. You can rest the wet towel on the helmet to loosen up the dirt. After you've clean your helmet, let it air dry.

Do not expose your helmet to chemicals. The foam and plastic shell can react badly to harsh chemicals such as bleach and other cleaners, weakening the helmets ability to protect your head.

## WHEN TO REPLACE A HELMET

Helmets are designed for a single impact. Once you take a hit to the head, it's time to replace your helmet. Even if your helmet looks fine, there can be internal damage that will keep it from protecting you the next time. This is also why you never want to buy a used helmet. It's almost impossible to know if a damage already protected a head from a tree branch or the ground unless it's new.

Not many people realize it, but helmets expire and need to be replaced every so many years. Most manufacturers will place a sticker with the date of expiration or the date of manufacturing. Most companies recommend you replace Every 3 to 5 years is commonly recommended for helmet replacement. For children, it may be an annual replacement to ensure the helmet fits properly as they grow up.

