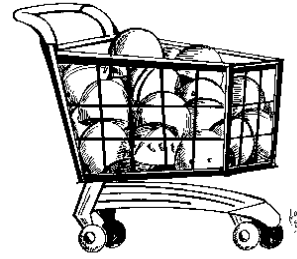


Buying a Bicycle Helmet



Why

- You can probably expect to crash in your next 4,500 miles of riding, maybe sooner.
- Even a low-speed fall on a bicycle path can scramble your brains.
- Laws in many states and localities require helmets.

How

- **Pick one that fits well:** level on your head, touching all around, comfortably snug but not tight.
- Pick one with reasonable vents, no snag points, no fussy adjustments, no rigid visor to shatter in a fall.
- Pick white or a bright color to be sure that motorists and other cyclists will see you.
- Don't worry too much about brands. *Consumer Reports* top-rated 24 brands for impact protection and found the others all Very Good. We think the Bell True Fit models in discount stores are easier to fit. But there are lots of other good ones out there. By law they all must meet the CPSC impact standard. Our testing shows that impact protection does not vary much by brand or price.

How Much?

- Lab tests show that cheap helmets perform as well in an impact as the most expensive ones.
- Bike shops: \$25 up to . . . whoa! Bike shops cost a little more but help you fit your helmet.
- Big Box Stores: Target and Wal-Mart start at \$12, with better buys at \$25. No fitting help.
- Internet: Less, but you can't try it on first for fit.
- Bottom line: Helmets are cheap now, don't wait for a sale.

