

Learning to ride a bike

Learning to ride a bike should be fun, and your child should be ready and motivated to learn! Children learn to ride a bike at many different ages and stages. They may need plenty of encouragement and positive reinforcement, as falling off and getting back on again is part of learning to ride a bike!

To ride a bike your child needs to learn a lot of different skills. They need to develop their balance on two wheels, along with the coordination to pedal, steer and brake, all whilst being aware of what is around them and where they are going!

The following suggestions may help you in teaching your child to ride a bike:

1. Make sure the bike is in good working order – check the tyres are suitably inflated, make sure the brakes work and stop the bike, check the saddle and handlebars don't wobble.
2. Your child should **always** wear a **helmet**.
3. Find a safe place to practice. A flat or gently sloping grassy field or park is a good option.
4. Firstly teach your child how to get on and off their bike.
5. Try turning their bike into a balance bike by taking the pedals off, so your child can put their feet flat on the ground. They can then practice scooting along and balancing.
6. Teach your child how to use the brakes safely, both to slow down and to stop.
7. Encourage your child to look where they are going and practice steering around some obstacles and changing direction, so they learn how to turn the handlebars.
8. Once your child has mastered the above using a balance bike, find a very SLIGHT slope so they can push off and allow the momentum of going downhill to carry them to the end of the slope.
9. If they enjoy and are able to do this, put the pedals back on the bike so they can place their feet on the pedals as they go downhill. Encourage them to keep the pedals going round once they reach flat ground. Alternatively, push them along and encourage them to keep pedalling.
10. Recap all of the skills above (steering, braking and stopping, and getting on and off the bike) with the pedals attached.

Riding a bike is a fun and healthy activity that can be sociable fun to do together. Your child will then have a skill and hobby that will last them a lifetime.

See British Cycling's excellent website at www.readysetrider.co.uk for further fun and helpful information and tips.

Contact details

Children's Therapy Services

Telephone number: 0300 019 2936

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an information prescription or contact:

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If you wish to make any comments or to ask about any research evidence used to write this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499, write to the Patient Experience Team (address above) or email patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk

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