

# TRAVEL SMART & STAY SAFE

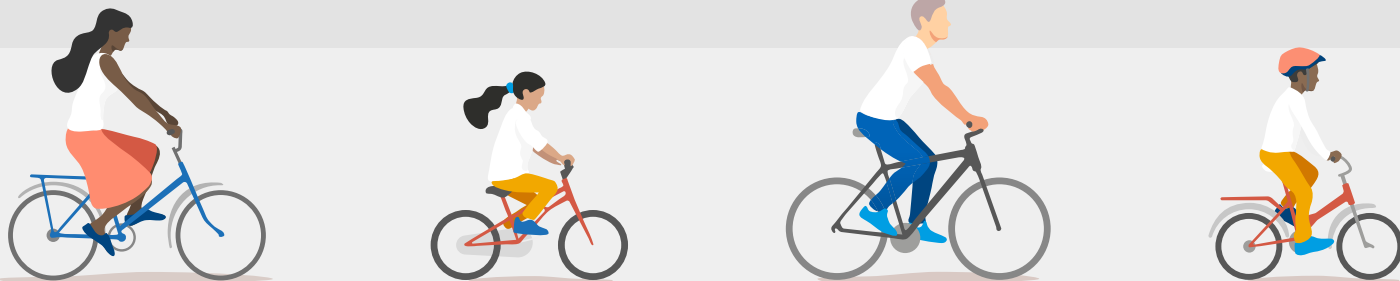
As the country adjusts to life in lockdown, the need to exercise and stay healthy is greater than it's ever been. While long rides in the country are out, short and fun family rides are fine, so check out our hints and tips for safer family cycling.

## Is it safe for my family to cycle?

The terms self-isolation and social distancing have caused some confusion among the public, with some questioning whether venturing out for a cycle ride is allowed. Government advice is clear that households can enjoy one form of exercise a day, whether alone or with members of your family. When you're out, you must stay two metres away from others and not venture too far from your home.

While this means that driving to your favoured riding destination isn't realistic, you can enjoy a safe family cycle ride in your local area. This can include riding to the local park or in the immediate area surrounding your home. Riding for just 15 minutes a day can have a positive impact on the physical and mental health of the whole family. You don't need to ride hard or for long distances to burn off calories and get the endorphins flowing.

The government is giving people the freedom to decide how far they think is reasonable, but we encourage all cyclists to be responsible. The pressure on our emergency services increases every day. So it becomes more vital that you and your family remain safe and protected on the roads, and follow government guidelines at all times.



## CYCLING SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Helmets aren't a legal requirement on the road, but they will provide protection in the unfortunate event of an accident. We believe that all children and adults should wear helmets whenever and wherever they ride. Make it fun and give them the fun choice of helmet. When they can choose between cool designs, they won't need much encouragement to strap it on before they saddle up.

A hi-vis jacket or tabard can improve the visibility of any rider on the road. Reflective panels will catch headlights, and the brightly coloured fabric will draw attention from drivers. They're cheap, lightweight and easy to pack away once you're in the park, so we advise all riders to consider wearing one.

Lights aren't just for nighttime, but for the day too. Front and rear daytime cycling lights can improve your visibility to all drivers and are a small price to pay for family cycling safety.

## ROAD SAFETY REMINDERS

Set out some ground rules before you leave. You're riding for fun, not racing, so explain the fundamentals of road safety for kids. Regardless of whether there are cars on the road, you must follow the Highway Code rules for cyclists. The laws and regulations apply to all cyclists of all ages, so even if you're an experienced cyclist, it pays to refresh your memory.

The basics include not jumping red lights, signalling clearly at all times and riding in a position where you can be seen (more on that below). Bikes should be fitted with bells and reflectors, and you should respect other road users and pedestrians. If you're sharing the road with other users (on a shared use path for instance), then keep your speed low. Alert others to your presence with your bell and give priority to vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and those on horses.

While many of our family bike ride tips are common sense, some are legal requirements. Fail to follow them and you could find yourself in trouble.

## PLAN YOUR ROUTE

Riding in a group presents many challenges and while the roads are relatively clear, you should be aware of your surroundings any time you head out. Before you saddle up and set-off, agree on the route that you are taking, including any scheduled stops.

## ROAD POSITIONING

When riding with children, having the correct road positioning is crucial. You should ensure that all riders are confident on the road, and ride outside of the gutters and away from the pavement. It's necessary to maintain a two-metre distance from any pedestrians. This may involve you riding in a more central position on the road than you're used to.

If you're riding past parked cars, position your bike at least 1.5m away from the cars (this is enough clearance for a swinging door). When approaching junctions, slow down and use your eyes to engage other road users.

As an adult, you must lead by example. Demonstrate safe road cycling techniques and your children will follow you.

One of our expert family bike ride tips is that if there are two adults, have one at the front and one at the rear with any children cycling in the middle between you. A child at the front or back may be more difficult for a driver to spot. If you or your children aren't confident on the road or clear on the road positioning advice, then don't take any chances, and find a traffic-free route or walk your bikes to the park instead. Our discovery hub has some fabulous bike rides to choose from.

## LOAD UP THE LITTLE ONES

If your little ones are just too little to cycle, a child's bike seat or a child bike trailer will enable them to join in on the fun. High-quality children's bike seats attach to the back of an adult bike and allow a child to be firmly strapped in. They're kept secure in an upright position and get to enjoy the great outdoors, seeing everything you see.

Child bike trailers are, as the name suggests, pulled by a bike. A secure mount keeps the trailer locked to your bike, with the child able to enjoy being a real backseat driver. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes, with large trailers suitable for carrying two tiny tearaways.

Children's bike seats and kids' cycle trailers are safe to use on the roads, but you must ensure that they're securely fitted to the bike. Check all fixings are stable and secure, and give everything a thorough going over, particularly if you haven't use the seat or trailer for a while.

If you've never ridden a bike with a seat attached or while towing a trailer, then we advise you to be cautious. The additional weight on your frame or towed at the rear can affect handling and braking distances, so take your time and enjoy the ride, instead of racing ahead.

## PRE-RIDE CHECKS

Check everyone's bike before leaving. Check that all moving components are running smoothly, chains are lubricated and brakes are functioning correctly. Pump up all tyres and fix any punctures. Give all bikes a thorough clean, washing off the dirt, grime (or dust!) before you set off.

## PACK THE ESSENTIALS

On family rides, pack the essentials. This includes refreshments and any tools, kits and tubes you may need for roadside repairs. Each rider should have a full water bottle, which can be mounted to the frame of most bikes. Even on cold days, children can become dehydrated quickly. A fruit bar, banana or small snack should provide enough fuel for rides of up to an hour. Remember, you won't be able to stop at your favourite local café or pub.

Pack a bike tool to manage any running repairs you might need to do. You should also carry a pump and a puncture repair kit, or selection of spare tubes for each bike. Chuck everything you need in a rucksack and remember to include a fully-charged mobile phone.