



Guidelines for purchasing a safe, comfortable riding helmet.

4-H Youth Development

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All youth participants in Idaho 4-H horse activities or events must wear an ASTM-SEI approved equestrian helmet whenever mounted on an equine, or are in a vehicle (cart, wagon, buggy, etc.) being pulled by an equine. There are several different makes and styles of Equestrian helmets. Please remember that that the helmet that you buy for use in the 4-H program is American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) and the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) approved.

We recommend that you purchase a helmet from a reputable tack dealer that has had training in fitting helmets. To be effective, the helmet must fit correctly. This information is a guide to assist 4-H members, parents and volunteers as a check to find a helmet that will fit properly. UI 4-H Youth Development does not endorse any make or model of helmet. These steps are written to be generic in nature and not specific to the brand, model or make of equine helmets.

Step 1: Measure your head

Using a flexible fabric measuring tape, measure the circumference of your head one inch above your eyebrows. You can do it yourself, or recruit a friend to make sure the tape stays flat and even around your head for an accurate measurement. Your measurement in centimeters corresponds to a hat size. Consult individual manufacturer's information for a size chart, or use the hat size conversion chart provided in the document as a starting point.

Step 2: Prepare the Helmet

Some styles of helmet have a built-in fitting system, such as a dial or a ratcheting mechanism in the back that will help the helmet fit snugly. Before trying it on, open the fitting system to its widest setting. Let the chin strap out far enough so that you will be able to buckle it, and then tighten it once you have the helmet on. Some helmets also have padded liners that can be adjusted for a more custom fit. If you're not sure how it will fit, try the largest setting first, and then add more pads later.

Step 3: Position the Helmet

Place the helmet on your head. If it is wobbly or uncomfortably tight, try a new size. If it seems okay, tighten the fitting mechanism, if applicable, and the chin strap. Make sure the helmet isn't tilted. The brim should be about an inch above your eyebrows and level across your forehead. You should feel even pressure around the circumference of your head. The chin strap should not be loose at all, but not so tight that you cannot move your head up and down comfortably.

Step 4: Check the Fit

Shake your head side to side and up and down. Your helmet shouldn't wobble at all. You may be able to make some adjustments to the fitting mechanism or the pads to correct an imperfect fit, but any major sliding or wobbling means you need to go down a size or try a different model. Your helmet should feel snug enough that it won't move if you hang your head upside down, but if it gives you a headache, try a different one.

Please remember:

Your helmet must be approved by the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) and the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI). This approval ensures that the helmet has is certified for equestrian use. ASTM/SEI approved headgear is required for all youth participants in Idaho 4-H horse activities or events whenever mounted on an equine, or are in a vehicle (cart, wagon, buggy, etc.) being pulled by an equine.

Using a tape measure will give you an idea of the right size, but everyone's head is shaped differently, so even if you find the correct size, it may not be a comfortable fit. Try on a few different helmets before you decide which one to purchase.

Helmet manufacturers are always improving the safety and fit of their products. This means that even if you just want to replace your old helmet with a new version in the same make and model, you should still try one on, if you can.

When you go to try on helmets, wear your hair the way you will when you are riding. A ponytail might put you a size up from what you would wear with your hair down. If you are purchasing a helmet for show, try it with your hair up and under the helmet or in a bun, depending on how you will wear it when you're competing.

Helmet Size Conversion Chart		
Head Size (Inches)	Hat Size	Alt. Size
20	6 ½	X-Small
20 ½	6 5/8	X-Small
21	6 ¾	Small
21 ½	6 7/8	Small
22	7	Medium
22 ½	7 1/8	Medium
23	7 ¼	Large
23 ½	7 3/8	Large
24	7 ½	Large
24 ½	7 5/8	X-Large
25	7 ¾	X-Large
25 ½	7 7/8	X-Large

The information provided in this brochure was adapted from an article by Leslie Potter from the Horse Channel.com. The original information can be found at "How to correctly fit an equestrian helmet." <http://www.horsechannel.com/horse-exclusives/equestrian-helmet-fit.aspx>. N.p., Web. 15 Sept. 2014.