

Eye Safety

WHERE DO MOST EYE INJURIES OCCUR?

An eye injury can occur at any time, in any place. Adequate prevention is important and could eliminate many eye injuries. Close to 50% of injuries occur during sports and recreational activities--more often in children and teens than any other age group.

WHAT KIND OF TOYS CAN CAUSE INJURIES?

Toys that are sharp are especially dangerous. Pencils, pens, darts, knives, fishing hooks, and scissors can easily penetrate the eye. Paint ball guns, pellet guns, and BB guns can all cause very serious injuries. Fireworks are extremely dangerous to the eyes as well; children should never be allowed to use them.

WHAT OTHER HOUSEHOLD ITEMS ARE DANGEROUS TO THE EYES?

Household items, such as bungee cords, forks, coat hangers, rubber bands, gardening tools, and kitchen gadgets can cause significant injuries. Chemicals used around the home, like bleach, cleaning products, and even soaps, shampoos, and perfumes can cause extreme irritation and/or damage. Laundry and dishwashing pods can be especially dangerous as they seem fun to play with but can easily explode into a child's eyes. Gardening tools and lawn mowers may propel rocks or particles toward the eyes. Acid from car batteries can explode, propelling chemical and particulate matter toward the eye. This can be especially dangerous when trying to "jump-start" a car. Safety glasses should be worn while working with potentially eye-damaging materials around the home, and children should be protected from exposure to vision-threatening situations. All dangerous chemicals should be kept safely away from children.

WHAT SPORTS HAVE THE HIGHEST INCIDENCE OF EYE INJURIES?

Sports with high velocity ball action are potentially the most dangerous--racquetball, squash, tennis, soccer, golf, baseball and softball, basketball, field hockey, lacrosse, water polo, and hockey.



WHAT KINDS OF EYE PROTECTION ARE AVAILABLE FOR SPORTS?

Protective glasses or face shields are available for most sports. The best protective eyewear is a sports frame (not daily wear glasses) with polycarbonate (shatter resistant) lenses. If a child has a need for better vision with glasses, this prescription can be placed in the sports glasses. Although many athletes wear contact lenses, they do not provide any protection against injury.

WHAT SPECIAL PROTECTION IS NEEDED IF A PERSON HAS POOR VISION IN ONE EYE?

Children (and adults) with poor vision in one eye should wear glasses for protection at all times to protect the better-seeing eye. Regulation sports glasses are necessary when participating in gym or sports.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IF A CHILD HAS AN EYE INJURY?

If there is a chemical injury, immediate irrigation with water is critical. Flush the eyes and face with any available source of water for at least 10-15 minutes. Follow up immediately with a trip to the emergency room or Ophthalmologist.

If a sharp object has penetrated the eye (like a fish hook), do not pull it out. Instead, transport the person to the emergency room as soon as possible. Other blunt or sharp injuries should be examined by an ophthalmologist, since the serious nature of the injury may not be readily apparent. It is also important to keep the child from having any food or drink by mouth once the injury has been known. This is in preparation for possible anesthesia that may be required to obtain a better evaluation or to proceed with timely surgical repair in the operating room.

Updated 04/2021