



Childrens Eye Safety

Accidents resulting in serious eye injury can happen to anyone, but are particularly common in children and young adults. More than 90% of all eye injuries can be prevented with appropriate supervision and protective eyewear.

Goggles and face protection can prevent injuries in sports like baseball, basketball, racket sports, and hockey. It is more difficult to protect against injuries in boxing, although thumbless gloves help.

Children with vision loss in one eye should wear polycarbonate safety glasses all the time and should wear safety goggles for sports and other dangerous activities. Choose frames and lenses that meet the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standard for safety (Z87.1).

Appropriate adult supervision is an essential part of preventing eye injuries. Children should never be allowed to play with fireworks or BB guns. Sharp and fast-moving objects such as darts, arrows, scissors, knives, and even pencils or pens can be dangerous. Special care should be taken when working around lawn mowers, which can throw rocks and debris, and when banging two pieces of metal together, which can dislodge small shards of metal. Chemicals such as toilet cleaners and drain openers are especially hazardous.

A primary care physician or an emergency room physician can treat minor injuries, such as a foreign body or an abrasion (scratch) on the cornea. Any foreign material will be removed from the eye, an antibiotic eyedrop or ointment may be used, and an eye patch may be applied for comfort.

More serious injuries, such as blood inside the eye (hyphema), a laceration (cut) of the eye, or rupture of the eye, require examination by an ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.). Both surgery and hospitalization may be necessary.

Chemicals that burn should be rinsed from the eye immediately. Chemical burns can cause severe damage, so eyes should be flushed immediately. If sterile solutions or eyewashes are readily available, use them to flush the affected eye. If not, flush the eye with liberal amounts of water from the nearest sink, shower, or hose for ten minutes. Be sure water is getting under both the upper and lower eyelids. After they eyes have been flushed for ten minutes, bring the child to the emergency room immediately. The ultimate visual outcome after a chemical burn depends on the severity of the injury, which cannot always be identified in the initial examination.