



Seattle Eye M.D.s

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Children's Eye Safety

Accidents resulting in serious eye injuries 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, though thumbless gloves help.

People who must rely on only one good 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 standard for safety (Z87.1).

Appropriate adult supervision is key in preventing all 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 can treat minor injuries, such as a foreign body or an abrasion (scratch) on the cornea. Any foreign material must be removed from the eye. An antibiotic drop or ointment may be applied, perhaps with an eye patch for comfort.

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

Chemicals that burn should be rinsed from the eye immediately. The ultimate outcome depends on the severity of the injury, which cannot always be identified in the initial examination.