

Eye Injuries



Prevention

First Aid



Eye Care for You

An estimated 90% of all eye injuries could be preventable and 45% of them tend to occur around the home. One should always be aware of ways to protect your vision, whether at work, school, home or play.

Proper first aid in the case of an eye injury is vital to preserve sight in the involved eye. Eye injuries, preventable as they are, do occur frequently and anywhere—in more than a million people every year.



The true severity of the eye injury is difficult to determine for the average person. Even an eyelash or a grain of sand under the eyelid can cause severe discomfort (but relatively little damage) due to the intense pain sensitivity of the cornea. An ophthalmologist or medical doctor should examine the involved eye after first aid is given.

Prevention of eye injuries:

Damage from eye injuries are best avoided by prevention of it occurring.

Children:

Some games and toys become hazardous when incorrectly used or abused.

- Select toys and games for appropriate age and responsibility levels.
- Projectile toys, e.g. pellet guns and darts should best be avoided as choices. These are usually thrust into another child's eyes from a distance.
- Children should be supervised when they are allowed to play with hazardous toys and games.
- Ideally, children should be educated how to use potentially dangerous items safely, e.g. pencils, scissors, rulers etc.

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Around the home: every day used products and solutions could cause severe chemical damage to an eye.

- Spray –can nozzles should be directed away from your face before the handle is pressed down.
- Instructions printed on the labels of detergents, cleaning fluids, ammonia or other chemicals, should be read carefully. Hands must be thoroughly washed after handling these substances.
- Extreme care should be taken to protect eyes when working with drain cleaners
- Special goggles should be used to shield your eyes from the fumes of powerful chemicals.
- Grease shields on frying pans will reduce splattering significantly.
- Opaque goggles reduces or avoids burns from sun beds / sunlamps.

The workshop environment:

Many objects can fly unexpectedly into the eye to cause damage.

Therefore one should:

- Wear safety glasses to protect your eyes.
- Read instructions thoroughly and observe the recommended precautions when using tools and chemicals in the workshop.
- Avoid flying fragments, dust particles, sparks, fumes and splashed chemicals, and protect your eyes when these entities are not avoidable.



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The garden:

Many outdoor accidents are caused by garden tools and chemicals.

Therefore:

- No one should be allowed around a moving lawn mower.
- Avoid going over rocks and stones with a lawnmower, to avoid these being thrust by the rotary blades and even re-bouncing off nearby walls, side walks or curbsides.
- Avoid low hanging branches,.
- Palm leaves and similarly shaped plant branches are notorious for causing penetrating eye injuries.
- Pesticide spray-can nozzles, should be directed away from the face before activating the spray.
- Avoid skin contact with pesticides.

The car:

Battery acid can cause serious eye damage and sparks can ignite fumes to explode rapidly. Therefore:

- All cigarettes and matches should be put out in the vicinity of the car.
- Use a flashlight (not the lighter or match) to illuminate the battery at night.
- Protective goggles should be available and used when using jumper cables.
- Protective goggles are essential when metal body repairs are done, including grinding and striking metal with metal.

Jump starting a car:

- The cars should not touch one another at all.
- Jumper clamps should be kept separate from one another.
- Do not lean over the battery when attaching the cables to the battery terminals.

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- The red (positive) cables should be attached to the red (positive) terminal of the dead battery first, and the other end should only then be attached to the good battery's red (positive) terminal.
- The black (negative) cable should be attached to the black (negative) terminal of the good battery first after which the other end should be attached to the grounded area of the engine, away from the negative terminal of the dead battery. It is not advisable to attach a cable to the negative terminal of the dead battery.

Sports injuries of the eyes:

These have increased significantly over the last several years.

Therefore:

- Safety glasses should be used for sports such as racket ball, squash, tennis, baseball, basketball.
- Protective caps, helmets and face protectors are essential in sports such as ice hockey.
- Sunglasses should be worn whenever practical for outdoor sports, e.g. golf, bowls, sailing, etc. to reduce ultraviolet exposure.

Fireworks:

Handling fireworks are potentially dangerous, irrespective of the age of the user.

- Explosive types of fireworks should best be avoided.
- Children should not be allowed to ignite fireworks.
- Light fireworks away from other people or crowds.

How and Where should eye injuries be treated?

Hospital emergency rooms see and treat patients with eye injuries and provide the emergency medical care needed. Emergency room personnel and doctors will refer the patient with an eye injury to an ophthalmologist whenever complications are suspected. Ophthalmologists are medical doctors who specialize in eye diseases and disorders and emergency treatment of eye injuries and its complications.

Following an eye injury: FIRST AID

Immediate and correct treatment can prevent or reduce loss of sight. Seek medical help as soon as possible, to determine the severity of the damage, and commence appropriate treatment without delay. An ophthalmologist or your family physician should be called immediately, or otherwise the patient should be taken to the nearest emergency department without delay.

Specks/ dust in the eye:

- The eye should never be rubbed.
- The upper eye lid could be lifted and pulled over the lower eye lid so that the lower lid lashes could brush off the speck/dust from the inside of the upper lid. Blinking several times could let the eye move the object out. If it does not come out, the eye should be kept closed and medical help should be sought.

A blow to the eye:

- Pain and swelling around the eye can be reduced with a cold compress for about 15 minutes. Avoid pressure onto the eyeball during this time.
- Blurred vision or a black eye might indicate the presence of internal eye damage. Your ophthalmologist's help should be sought without delay.

Eye lid cuts and penetrating eye injuries:

- A light eye bandage should be applied avoiding any pressure on the eyeball.
- No attempt should be made to wash the eye or remove a foreign object that is stuck into the eye.
- Avoid rubbing the eye or applying any pressure to the eye or eye lid.
- Immediate medical attention is vital.

Chemical burns / injuries:

- Flush the eye with water directly and use fingers to open the eye widely.
- Use a water tap / faucet or bottle or similar container with clean water.
- This flushing should last at least 15 minutes in a gentle but continuous way.
- Let the patient roll around the eye ball during the flushing process, to wash out the eye. An eye cup is inappropriate, and not advisable.
- Do not bandage the eye.
- Take the patient to an ophthalmologist or a hospital emergency room with out delay
- Take the empty container or label of the involved chemical container with the patient, so that identification will assist in appropriate treatment chosen.

An eye injury necessitates immediate help and attention, especially when there is reduced vision and / or pain present. First aid given correctly can save vision or limit vision loss. Medical attention should not be delayed.

The most important treatment for eye injuries is prevention and attention given to safety practices is a vital way of saving

Eye Care for You



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