

FIRST AID FOR THE EYES

Eye injuries range from abrasions of the cornea and bruises of the eyelids to internal injuries such as retinal detachments and internal bleeding. Know what to do when something gets in your eye or an eye injury occurs. **Examples:**

Specks in the eye • Don't rub; you may scratch the eye or embed the object. Let the tears wash the speck out, or go to the nearest eyewash station and flush the eye until the object has been rinsed out. If the object won't rinse out, loosely bandage the eye and get medical attention.

Embedded objects, cuts and punctures • Don't try to wash the eye with water or any other liquid, or attempt to remove an object that is stuck in the eye. Cover the eye with a rigid shield, such as the bottom half of a paper cup, and get medical attention.

Bumps and blows • Apply a cold compress. Don't put pressure on the eye or put ice directly on the eye. Crushed ice in a plastic bag can be used, as long as the bag rests on your forehead. See a physician if there is reduced vision, continued pain, swelling or blood in the eye.

Chemical splashes • Immediately flush the eye with water (keep contact lenses in if you wear them). Hold the eye wide open — with your fingers if you have to — and flush the eye for at least 15 minutes. Do not bandage the eye; get medical help immediately after flushing. **Tip:** Always read the container label and/or Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) before using any chemical to get instructions for emergency and first aid treatment.



MORE EYE CARE TIPS

Be wary of fireworks. Fireworks, which are illegal in many areas, are a special danger to your eyes. Fireworks such as bottle rockets are unpredictable. Not only can the people setting them off suffer serious injuries, but bystanders 40 and 50 feet away can be seriously injured or even killed by stray fireworks.

Work safely around a car battery.

Always wear splash-proof polycarbonate goggles when jump-starting your battery. Goggles should have a Z-87 rating on the frame, which means they are certified for use during automobile repairs.



Ease eyestrain. Vary your work tasks so that your eyes can take a break from your computer screen periodically.

Know the differences among eye care providers. An **ophthalmologist** is a medical doctor specializing in eye care, with several years of training beyond medical school and the ability to perform eye surgery. An **optometrist** is a doctor of optometry with four years of training at an optometric college. Optometrists cannot perform surgery or treat diseases of the back of the eye. An **optician** is a technician licensed to fit and sell corrective lenses that have been prescribed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist.

Keep germs away from your eyes. Think twice before rubbing your eyes or working with contacts. Proper hand washing is more than just a quick rinse; it's thoroughly washing with warm, soapy water for about 20 seconds at least.

Eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.

A healthy, balanced diet, combined with regular exercise, benefits your body from your head to your toes. Concentrate on fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains — eat more plant-based foods. Exercise at least 30 minutes most days. A healthy lifestyle helps prevent the health conditions that are associated with eye diseases.

Final thought: Your eyes are precious assets. Take care to shield them from hazards on the job and off. See your eye doctor as recommended, and take a proactive approach to help your vision last a lifetime.

EYE SAFETY AND HEALTH

TAKING CARE OF YOUR VISION



EYE PROTECTION: IT'S UP TO YOU



Have you ever thought about what life would be like if you lost your sight? Most people probably try not to think about it. Do you always notice and guard against eye hazards on and off the job?

Statistics suggest that an estimated two-thirds of eye injuries happen off the job, according to the National Safety Council. So eye safety is as much an issue outside of work as it is at the workplace. Wearing safety eyewear correctly can prevent at least 90 percent of injuries, experts say.

Get familiar with eye hazards and how to guard against them, as well as eye health and first aid practices that will help your sight last a lifetime. The information in this brochure can help.



Your Eyes Need Health Care Too

In addition to the proper safety eyewear, early detection and treatment of eye conditions and diseases are essential to maintaining good vision at every stage of life. The five most common age-related eye diseases are cataracts, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, dry eye and age-related macular degeneration.

You should visit an ophthalmologist or optometrist as recommended depending on your age and risk factors: age 40 or older, diabetes, high blood pressure or history of eye injury or eye problems.

Symptoms that warrant a call to your eye doctor include:

- Visual changes or pain
- Flashes of light
- Seeing spots or ghostlike images
- Lines appearing distorted or wavy
- Dry eyes with itching and burning

A Delicate Matter

All parts of the eye (what you can see and what you can't) are very delicate. The eye relies on nerves, muscles and signals from the brain — working together — to see correctly.

While the eyelids, eyelashes and natural tears provide basic protection for the eye, in many situations that's just not enough. Fact is, the eye can be destroyed in a fraction of a second, whether in the workplace where there may be flying metal or glass or harmful radiation, or at home during do-it-yourself projects or recreational softball games.

The good news is, eye protection has come a long way through the years, becoming nearly as fashionable as it is functional in some settings.

What's most important is that you raise your awareness of potential eye hazards, wear eye protection correctly when recommended and work proactively to keep your eyes healthy.

The Trouble With Diabetes

Diabetes is associated with several health complications, including eye diseases such as diabetic retinopathy (the most common), cataracts and glaucoma. Diabetic retinopathy occurs when diabetes damages the blood vessels of the retina.

People with diabetes also tend to develop cataracts at an earlier age and are twice as likely to get glaucoma as other adults. **The bottom line:** If you have diabetes or prediabetes, keep your blood sugar in check and follow your health care provider's plan.



Keep Your Eyes Covered

... **at work.** Follow all workplace rules about eye safety and wearing protective eyewear such as safety glasses, goggles and face shields. Make sure the equipment fits properly and that you know how to use and care for it correctly. Ask your supervisor if you need help.

... **at home.** Cooking, cleaning house, working in the yard and fix-it jobs — you probably expose yourself to eye hazards more often than you think. Hot grease, cleaners, garden chemicals and flying objects are just a few of the dangers. Raise your awareness and keep a properly fitting pair of goggles handy. It's better to be safe than sorry.

... **at play.** Have you noticed that more and more professional athletes are wearing protective shields or goggles during games? You should too. A finger poke or flying ball can lead to eye abrasions or damage deep inside the eye.

Tip: Check with your eye care professional for specific requirements for sports.

... **in the morning.** Accidents can happen when brushes and fingernails are working near the eyes. Take care when inserting contact lenses and applying mascara or other face products. And cover your eyes when using hair spray products.

... **in the sun.** Make it a habit to wear UV-A and UV-B protective sunglasses whenever you're outdoors. Long-term exposure to ultraviolet rays is associated with conditions such as macular degeneration (losing ability to see fine details), cataracts (clouding of the lens), and skin cancers around the eye.



About Contact Lenses ...

Contact lenses offer no protection from eye hazards, and regular eyeglasses are inadequate to protect against any type of eye injury.

Wear and replace lenses according to the schedule prescribed by your eye doctor. Follow the lens cleaning and storage guidelines, and use contact lens solutions as directed by the manufacturer.