

October Health Newsletter

October is Eye Injury Prevention Month. Each year thousands of children sustain eye damage from accidents at home. Many are sports-related injuries. More than ninety percent of all eye injuries can be prevented through the use of protective eyewear. Most sports-related injuries in the U.S. occur while playing baseball. The following tips are recommended to prevent injuries.

Children should wear sports eye protectors made with polycarbonate lenses for baseball, basketball, football, racquet sports, soccer, hockey, lacrosse and paintball.

All chemicals and sprays must be kept out of reach of small children.

Parents and guardians need to practice safe use of common items that can cause serious eye injury, such as paper clips, pencils, scissors, bungee cords, wire coat hangers and rubber bands.

Parents need to purchase age-appropriate toys. Avoid projectile toys such as darts, bows and arrows, and missile-firing toys. Look for toys marked with "ASTM", which means the product meets the national safety standards set by the American Society for Testing and Materials.

Use safety gates on stairs, pad or cushion sharp corners, and put locks on reachable cabinets and drawers.

Do not allow your children to play with pellet guns or BB guns. Do not allow children near fireworks since fireworks pose a serious risk of eye injury and have been banned in several states.

Children should always be secured in child safety seats and children age twelve and younger should never ride in the front seat. It is important to store loose items in the trunk or secured on the floor, since any loose object can become a dangerous projectile in a car crash.

The following are important tips regarding first aid:

When an eye injury occurs, it is important to seek medical attention immediately. Delaying medical attention can cause the damaged areas to worsen and could result in permanent vision loss or blindness.

In the event of an eye injury, never touch, rub or apply pressure to the eye. Only in the event of chemical exposure, flush with plenty of water.

Do not attempt to remove any object stuck in the eye. For small debris, lift the eye lid and ask the child to blink rapidly to see if tears will flush out the particle. If not, close the eye and seek treatment. Do not apply ointment or medication to the eye. A cut or puncture wound should be gently covered.

Please practice these safety tips to maintain healthy eyes and vision. More information can be found at www.geteyesmart.org Routine eye exams are crucial. Have a safe and happy October and be eye smart!

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