



Children

Eye Care for little
people



Eye Care for You

Are My Child's Eyes Protected During Sports and Recreational Activities?

It may be difficult at first to convince your budding Wayne Gretzky and Lisa Leslie to be the first on the team to wear eye protection. But it's even more difficult to hear words like "corneal laceration," "globe rupture" or "hyphema" when you're standing in an emergency room with your injured child.

There are an estimated 40,000 sports and recreation-related eye injuries each year and the majority of them happen to children.

Most of you know about the importance of bicycle helmets, catcher's masks and skating pads for your kids, but what many of you may not know is that your child's vision also may be at risk if he or she plays certain sports without special eye protection. The good news is that 90 percent of these injuries are preventable with the appropriate eyewear.

If your child plays sports, your Eye M.D. (Ophthalmologist) and the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommend the following eye protection:

- Baseball, hockey and lacrosse—a helmet with a polycarbonate facemask or wire shield. Make sure hockey facemasks are approved by the Hockey Equipment Certification Council (HECC) or the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or a similar local organization.

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- Basketball, racquet sports and soccer-sports goggles with polycarbonate lenses and side shields. Make sure goggles meet the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards.
- Eyewear may be needed for other sports as well. Check with your Eye M.D. (Ophthalmologist) for the proper protection.

Although no type of eye protection can prevent every injury, studies and experience have shown that the right protective eyewear is very effective. Also, there's no evidence that wearing eye protection hampers athletic performance. Many famous athletes, including NBA All-Star Kareem Abdul-Jabber and NFL Hall of Famer Eric Dickerson, have excelled in their respective sports while wearing protective eyewear.

As well as sports activities, certain toys also can pose a threat to your child's vision. Be sure that toys and games are appropriate for your child's age and maturity level. Children's eyes can be severely injured by sharp or protruding parts or toys with projectiles. **AVOID GIVING YOUR CHILDREN TOYS SUCH AS BOWS AND ARROWS, DARTS AND PELLET GUNS.**

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How often Should I Have My Children's Eyes Screened?

Your Eye M.D. (Ophthalmologist) recommends the following schedule for pediatric eye examinations.

Children:

Screening for eye disease by trained personnel—Eye M.D. (Ophthalmologist), pediatrician or trained screener should be conducted at:

- Newborn to 3 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 3 years (approximately)
- 5 years (approximately)

Some factors may put your child at increased risk for eye disease. If any of these factors apply to your child, check with your Eye M.D. (ophthalmologist) to see how often you should have a medical eye exam:

- Premature birth
- Developmental delay
- Personal or family history of eye disease
- African-American heritage (African-Americans are at increased risk for glaucoma)
- Previous serious eye injury
- Use of certain medications (check with your Eye M.D., Ophthalmologist.)
- Some diseases that affect the whole body (such as diabetes, Arthritis, High Blood Pressure, or HIV infection).

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How Can I Keep My Child's Eyes Healthy?

Nearly one in twenty preschoolers and one in four school-aged children have a problem that could result in permanent vision loss if left untreated. That is why it is important to have your child's eyes screened by an eye specialist, such as an Eye M.D. (Ophthalmologist), primary care provider, family doctor, pediatrician or a trained screener. They should see an Eye M.D. promptly if there is a family history of eye problems or if a problem is apparent. An Eye M.D. can detect possible vision problems and take action to correct them early before they become more serious.

Every child should have an eye screening before age 5.

An eye care professional will screen your child for:

- Amblyopia—a serious disorder in which the brain “shuts off” images from a “weaker” or misaligned eye. The problem can often be corrected by patching the stronger eye for a period of time. If not treated early, the condition can become permanent.
- Ptosis—a drooping of the upper eyelid. The lid may droop slightly or it may completely cover the pupil. At times, ptosis can restrict or block normal vision. Surgery usually corrects the problem, but there are times when medications are used instead.

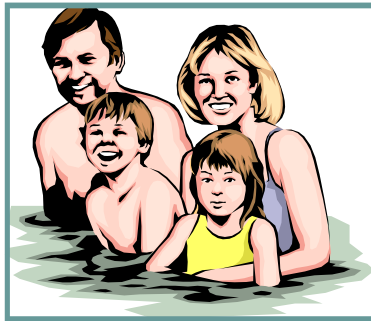
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- Strabismus—sometimes signaled by “crossed eyes,” this disorder can lead to serious vision problems. It can often be corrected with glasses or in some cases surgery.
- Refractive errors—these include nearsightedness (myopia), farsightedness (hyperopia) and astigmatism. These problems can be corrected with glasses or for older children contact lenses.

Because some of these conditions are easy to miss, early detection and treatment of childhood eye problems is crucial for maintaining good vision throughout life. Consider the recommended schedule for pediatric eye examinations.

Also, another way to ensure your child keeps his or her good vision throughout life is for you to set a good health example:

- Always wear protective eyewear when playing sports, working in the yard, using harsh chemicals or working on the car.
- Make sure your children know the hazards of playing with fireworks. Don't use them yourself or allow kids to use them. Instead, take your family to a professional fireworks show.
- Have your own eye exams (and other health exams) at recommended intervals. It demonstrates to your child that his or her body is worth taking care of and that preventive medicine is the best medicine.



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