



Proper Vision and Vision Safety

Important During Children's Sports

When your child can't get a hit in the little league, misses catching the ball in the outfield or can't get the basketball in the hoop, it may be that vision problems are causing the poor athletic ability. Without proper vision and vision safety precautions; playtime could put your child at risk for injury. It is important for parents, teachers and guardians to understand the risk factors involved in sports and take precautions to prevent injuries from occurring.

Each year hospital emergency rooms treat an estimated 33,000 sports related eye injuries. Among five to 14 year olds, baseball injuries are most frequent with basketball a close second. Any traumatic eye injury may increase the risk of other eye problems such as glaucoma and cataracts.

Risk Factors that can Increase the Likelihood of Injury during Sports include:

Developmental Skills: Young athletes may not have well-developed coordination, balance, reaction time, speed and strength. Need to spend time to teach your child proper techniques.

Skill Level: In most sports, beginner tends to receive more injuries than intermediate or advanced players. Beginners may not yet have the skills necessary to master the sport. By closely matching players' skill and ability levels, you can reduce the frequency and severity of injuries.

Visually Impaired Athlete: Athletes with impaired vision in one or both eyes are at special risk since a serious eye injury could leave them with severe visual limitation or permanently blind. Make sure any child with impaired vision consults with an eye care professional before deciding to participate in sports. A professional can offer eye care advice and help athletes choose the proper eye protection.

Wearing the right protective eyewear is important during sports. Polycarbonate lenses are made of a type of plastic and provide the highest degree of impact resistance of all lenses available on the market. These lenses are recommended for spectacle wearers in moderate-risk sports such as baseball and basketball. Face masks and helmets are another way to guard against injury. Masks and helmets are required for higher risk sports such as football, little league batter/runner, or baseball catcher.



Signs to Look for During Sports that may Indicate a Vision Problem

1. Headaches
2. Performance not up to potential
3. Poor eye-hand coordination
4. Performance worsens under high stress situations
5. Little or no improvement with practice
6. Making unusual errors
7. Inconsistent performance

First Aid for Eye Emergencies During Sports

Blow to the Eye

Prior to getting emergency medical care:

1. Do: gently apply small cold compresses without pressure immediately to reduce pain and swelling.
2. Do: seek emergency medical care in cases of pain, reduced vision, or discoloration (black eye), which could mean internal damage to the eye.

Cuts and Punctures to Eye or Eyelid

1. Do: bandage lightly without pressure and see a doctor at once.
2. Do Not: wash out eye with water.
3. Do Not: try to remove an object stuck in the eye

Specks in the Eye

1. Do: lift upper eyelid outward and down over the lower lid
2. Do: let tears wash out speck or particle, or use an eye wash
3. Do: if the speck doesn't wash out, keep eye closed, bandage lightly and see a doctor
4. Do Not: rub the eye
5. Do: see competent medical help
6. Do Not: assume that any eye injury is innocent. When in doubt, seek competent medical help immediately!