

# Safety and Sports Goggles: An Ounce of Prevention



By Mark T. Shapiro, MD

The start of training for school sports can bring a surge of sports-related eye injuries among young athletes. And there may be times as a parent when you have seen your child get clobbered on a court or the field.

Eyes are very sensitive parts of the body and can be easily injured. Over 40,000 sports-related eye injuries happen each year to children, but nine out of 10 such injuries can be avoided if protective eyewear is worn.<sup>1</sup> Parents will outfit their children with helmets, knee and elbow pads, and even mouth guards, but they need to also provide eye protection, especially for those who wear eyeglasses or contact lenses because this eyewear poses more severe risk of eye injury than participants using no eye protection at all.

Parents should educate young athletes and their coaches about the dangers of eye injuries and encourage the use of eye protection, especially for high-risk sports like baseball, softball, basketball, hockey and racquet sports.

It's best to check with your eye doctor to get the perfect fit for your child as wearing ill-fitting equipment can be just as dangerous as wearing nothing at all. There is also a wide range of polycarbonate face masks and guards that can be attached to helmets or worn by themselves.

Teaching kids to take care of their physical activity and sport equipment and safety gear can prevent injuries.

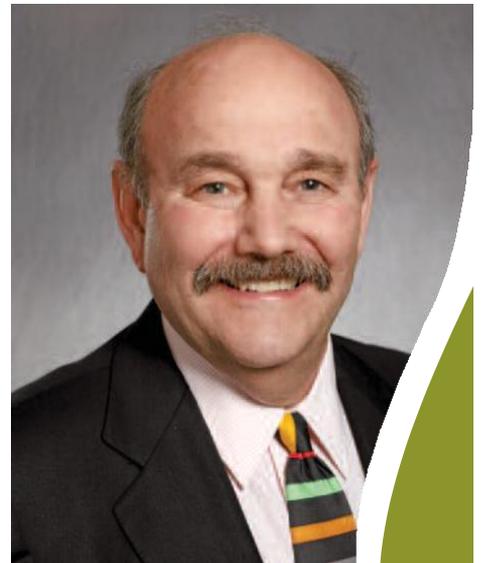
## The DOs and DON'Ts of Emergency Eye Care

Mild injuries, such as eyelid bruises and corneal abrasions, usually cause no long-term damage, but serious injuries can have lasting effects. High-impact injuries can lead to internal injuries, such as retinal detachments and internal bleeding. The bones around the eye could fracture, which may require surgery. Eye injuries are the leading cause of blindness in children<sup>1</sup>

Until a medical professional can be seen, the following steps can be taken:<sup>2</sup>

- Protect the eye by holding a folded cloth over the eye, having it act as a shield.
- Bandage any cuts around the eye to prevent contamination or infection.
- Flush the eye with water if there is small debris in the eye.
- Use a cold compress to treat a blunt trauma injury such as a black eye, but be careful not to apply additional pressure.
- Do not remove any objects that are stuck in the eye as this could cause vital eye fluids to leak out.
- Do not wash out the eye when dealing with cuts or punctures to the eye.
- Stay away from applying ointments or taking any medications, including over-the-counter drugs.
- Do not rub the eye. Doing so could cause more damage.

1. Johns Hopkins Medicine, news release, July 26, 2012
2. The Vision Council, National Association for Sport and Physical Education, Eye Safety At-A-Glance



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