

# FIRST AID FOR EYE INJURIES

Correct treatment of an eye injury immediately following an accident can prevent loss of sight. Because it is difficult to determine the extent of damage to the eye, medical help should be sought as soon as first aid is completed: call an ophthalmologist, your family physician, or go to a nearby hospital emergency room immediately!

## FOR FIRST AID CARE OF:

### SPECKS IN THE EYE

Never rub any speck or particle that is in the eye. Lift the upper lid over the lower lid allowing the lashes to brush the speck of the inside of the upper lid. Blink a few times and let the eye move the particle out. If the speck remains, keep your eye closed and seek medical help.



Lift the upper lid over the lower lid

### BLOWS TO THE EYE

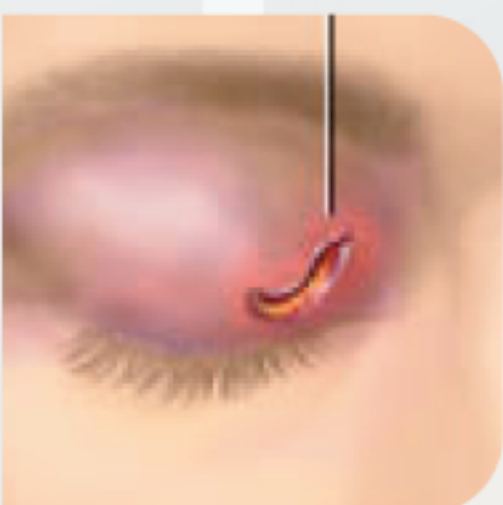
Apply an ice cold compress immediately for about 15 minutes to reduce pain and swelling. A black eye or blurred vision could signal internal eye damage. See your ophthalmologist immediately.



Apply an ice cold compress.

### CUTS OF THE EYE AND LID

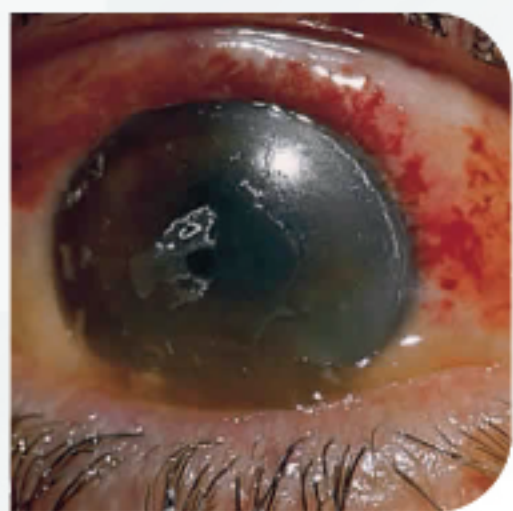
Bandage the eye lightly and seek medical help immediately. Do not attempt to wash out the eye or remove an object stuck in the eye. Never apply pressure to the injured eye or eye lid and be careful not to rub the eye.



Bandage eye lightly.

### CHEMICAL BURNS

Flood the eye with water immediately, using your fingers to keep the eye open as wide as possible. Hold your open as wide as possible. Hold your head under a faucet or pour water into the eye from any clean container for at least 15 minutes, continuously and gently. Roll the eyeball as much as possible to wash out the eye. Do not use an eye cup. Do not bandage the eye. Seek medical help immediately after these steps are taken.



Flood the eye with water.

Though prompt, proper treatment of eye injuries can save vision, it is important to remember that first aid is just that. It is immediate treatment that is given "first," until experienced medical help is available. When an accident involves the eye, it is always wise to seek medical help immediately if there is pain or any question of damage or impaired vision.

Safety is the best way to save sight, and the most effective treatment for eye injuries is prevention!

# Eye Injuries

Prevention and First Aid



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# EYE INJURIES

The ability to give proper first aid for an eye injury can be a vital step to saving someone's sight. Though most eye injuries are usually preventable, they occur frequently and can happen anywhere. Over one million people suffer eye injuries each year. Eye mishaps are among the injuries treated most frequently in hospital emergency rooms.

It is estimated the 90% of all eye injuries are preventable, and that 45% of them occur around the home. Whether you're at home, school work, or play, you should always be aware of the best ways to protect your sight.

When an eye injury occurs, it is difficult for the average person to determine how severe the damage is. Because the eye is supersensitive to pain, even an eyelash or a piece of dirt inside the lids can cause extreme discomfort. Therefore, it is often difficult to assess the extent of an eye injury. It is always important to have an ophthalmologist or other medical doctor examine an injured eye immediately after first aid is administered.

## WHO CAN TREAT EYE INJURIES?

Physicians and emergency room personnel are usually able to provide emergency medical care for eye injuries, but referral to an ophthalmologist will be made if there is any possibility of complications.

An ophthalmologist is the medical doctor (MD or osteopath) who is educated and trained to provide total care of the eyes including emergency treatment for eye injuries and their complications. Total eye care includes performing comprehensive medical eye examinations, prescribing corrective lenses, diagnosing injuries and disorders of the eye, and using the appropriate medical and surgical procedures necessary for their treatment. Only an ophthalmologist can provide total eye care.

### PREVENTION OF EYE INJURIES

Prevention is the first and most important step towards avoiding damage from eye injuries.

In the house because everyday products can sometimes cause serious burns when they touch your eyes,

- Make sure that all spray nozzles are directed away from you before you press down on the handle.
- Read instructions carefully before using cleaning fluids, detergents, ammonia or harsh chemicals. Wash hands thoroughly after use.
- Use grease shields on fry pans to decrease spattering.
- Wear special goggles when using powerful chemicals to shield your eyes from fumes and splashes.
- Use opaque goggles to avoid burns from sunlamps.

### IN THE WORKSHOP

Because many objects can fly into your eyes unexpectedly and cause damage,

- Protect yourself by wearing safety glasses.
- Read instructions thoroughly for tools and chemicals you are using and observe precautions for their use.
- Think about protecting your eyes from flying fragments, fumes, dust particles, sparks and splashed chemicals before you begin work.

### AROUND CHILDREN

Because many toys and games can be dangerous when used incorrectly,

- Remember to pay attention to age and responsibility level of a child when selecting toys and games. Avoid projectile toys such as darts, pellet guns, etc., which can be thrust into the eye from a distance.
- Supervise children when they are playing with toys or games that can be dangerous.
- Teach children the correct way to handle potentially dangerous items such as scissors and pencils.

### IN THE GARDEN

Because garden tools and chemicals are the cause of many outdoor accidents,

- Don't let anyone stand on the side or in front of a moving lawnmower.
- Pick up rocks and stones before going over them with your lawn mower. These stones can hurl out of the rotary

blades and "rebound" off curbs or walls, causing severe injury to the eye.

- Make sure that pesticide spray can nozzles are directed away from your face.
- Be careful to avoid low hanging branches.

### AROUND THE CAR

Because sparks and fumes can ignite rapidly and explode, and battery acid can cause serious eye damage,

- Before opening the hood of the car, put out all cigarettes or matches. Use a flashlight, and not a match or lighter, to illuminate the battery at night.
- Keep protective goggles next to your jumper cables and wear them.
- Wear protective goggles when grinding metal, or striking metal against metal while doing auto body repair.

### WHEN JUMP-STARTING A CAR

- Make sure that cars are not touching one another.
- Be sure that the jumper cable clamps never touch each other.
- Never lean over the battery when attaching cables.
- Attach one end of the positive (red) cable to the positive terminal of the dead battery first, and then attach the other end to the good battery.
- Attach the negative (black) cable to the negative terminal of the good battery and then attach the black cable to a grounded area on the engine away from the negative terminal of the dead battery. (Never attach a cable to the negative terminal of the dead battery).

### IN SPORT

Because sports eye injuries have increased significantly,

- Wear protective safety glasses especially for sports such as racquetball, squash, tennis, baseball and basketball.
- Wear protective caps, helmets, or face protectors when appropriate, especially for sports such as ice hockey.

### AROUND FIREWORKS

Because all fireworks can be dangerous to people of all ages,

- Explosive fireworks should not be used.
- Never allow children to ignite fireworks.
- Do not stand near others when lighting.