Each year, one million people are affected by eye injuries. 90% of these could be prevented by using protective gear and taking the following precautions.

**Eye Safety Awareness**

**Household**

*Half of all eye injuries occur around the home.*

- Common household items can cause serious eye injury. Keep potentially dangerous items out of reach of babies and toddlers, and teach older children how to handle them carefully:
  - Scissors
  - Knives
  - Forks
  - Paper clips
  - Rubber bands
  - Bungee cords
  - Pencils
  - Wire coat hangers
  - Fishhooks

- Wash your hands after using household chemicals, and keep them out of reach and/or locked up.

- Install cushions on furniture with sharp edges.

- Keep children away from lawnmowers in use, as debris may be projected into the air.

- Keep children away from fireworks.

- Encourage children to wear UV-protective sunglasses.

**Toys**

*Toys and home playground equipment cause more than 11,000 injuries to young eyes each year.*

- Consider children’s age and responsibility level when choosing toys and games.

- Provide supervision during activities that use sharp objects.

- Avoid projectile toys such as darts, BB guns, air rifles, bow-and-arrows and slingshots.

**Sports**

*Emergency rooms treat 40,000 victims of sports eye injuries per year.*

- Require children to wear appropriate protective eyewear, and set an example by using protective gear yourself.
  - Safety glasses should be worn for racquet sports such as tennis, squash and racquetball.
  - Protective helmets and face protectors should be worn for sports like hockey and ATV riding.
  - Baseball is the leading cause of sports-related eye injury to children. Encourage the use of a batting helmet and consider other protective eyewear.

- Be aware that boxing and full-contact martial arts pose an extremely high risk of serious or blinding eye injury.

**Computers**

*Prolonged computer/video game screen viewing can result in eyestrain (red, watery eyes, problems focusing, muscle spasms and headache).*

- Remind children not to sit too close to the TV or computer screen and to take regular breaks.

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**Sources**

Casey Eye Institute at OHSU - www.ohsucasey.com
The Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology
www.eyecareamerica.org

Doernbecher Children’s Safety Center
(503) 418-5666 – safety@ohsu.edu
www.ohsu.edu/childsafety