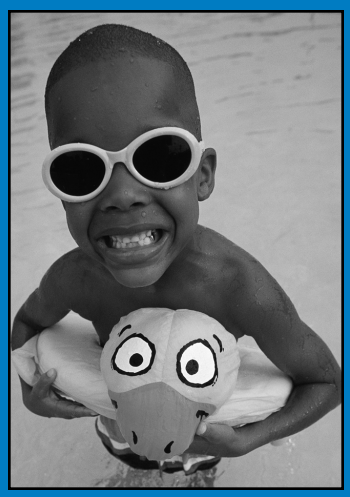
Educating Your Community

About

Protective Eyewear



Tips and Tools for Making Vision a Health Priority

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health
National Eye Institute

Healthy People 2010 Vision

Educating Your Community About Protective Eyewear

Tips and Tools for Making Vision a Health Priority

This Handbook is for people who want to help promote eye health education in their communities. It contains:

- Facts about protective eyewear
- Activity suggestions
- Promotional materials
- Reproducible brochure.

This Handbook is part of the Healthy Vision 2010 Toolkit. See the inside back cover for more information about the toolkit.

This Handbook is from the National Eye Institute (NEI), the lead agency for Healthy Vision 2010. The NEI conducts and supports research that leads to sight-saving treatment and plays a key role in reducing visual impairment and blindness. The NEI is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For more information about the NEI, contact:

National Eye Institute
National Institutes of Health
2020 Vision Place
Bethesda, MD 20892–3655
Telephone: 301-496-5248
E-mail: 2020@nei.nih.gov
Website: www.nei.nih.gov

Contents

Welcome to Healthy Vision 2010 1

Help Increase the Use of Protective Eyewear 3

Facts About Protective Eyewear.....11

Newspaper or Newsletter Article:
“Eye Safety Is a Year-Round Concern” 15

Radio Public Service Announcement..... 17

Print Public Service Announcement 19

Brochure To Copy and Hand Out:
“Don’t Lose Sight of Eye Injury. Use Protective Eyewear.”..... 21

Welcome to Healthy Vision 2010

Nearly 2.5 million eye injuries occur each year in the United States. Almost half of them occur around the home, and many of these are caused by consumer products. Another one-fourth occur on streets and highways and during sporting and recreational activities. Ultra-violet radiation from the sun also can slowly damage the eyes over time, possibly contributing to cataract and/or age related macular degeneration.

Eye injury is a leading cause of visual impairment in one eye (monocular). It ranks second only to cataract as the most common cause of visual impairment overall. Ninety percent of these eye injuries can be prevented by employing good safety practices, including the wearing of proper protective eyewear.

Increasing the use of appropriate personal protective eyewear in recreational activities and hazardous situations around the home is an objective of Healthy Vision 2010. Healthy Vision 2010 is one component of Healthy People 2010, a comprehensive framework for improving the health of our Nation, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

You can play an important role in helping to increase the use of protective eyewear. Share the messages and materials in this Handbook with people who may be risking eye injuries, and with the people who care about them.

Some suggestions for using the materials in this Handbook include the following:

- Cut out, copy, and distribute the brochure, newsletter article, and print public service announcements (PSAs).
- Include the newsletter article and PSAs in your publications, or on your Intranet or Website.
- Record the radio PSAs and play them on your audio system, on-hold line, or local radio station.
- Read the suggestions in the “Help Increase the Use of...” section to see other ways that your organization or business can become part of a community-wide effort to reduce vision loss due to eye injury.

Learn how others are helping. Get the most current information and materials and report your activities at www.healthyvision2010.org/. This Website is updated regularly.

Thank you for giving your time and talents to the important effort of helping to increase the use of protective eyewear. Best wishes for your success.

Help Increase the Use of Protective Eyewear

Virtually all Americans are exposed to potential eye injuries. Nearly half of all eye injuries occur at home. More than one-fourth occur during sporting and recreational activities, or on streets and highways. Eye injury is a leading cause of visual impairment in one eye. It ranks second only to cataract as the most common cause of visual impairment overall. Eye injuries can interfere with people's ability to perform their jobs or to participate in the activities of daily living, such as reading and driving.

Prevention is vital. Wearing protective eyewear can prevent most eye injuries from occurring. Removing environmental hazards can help, too. Using eye protection while working with lawn, garage, and household chemicals and tools is important.

Every year, toys and playground equipment cause thousands of eye injuries. Nearly all of these injuries can be prevented with precaution and appropriate protective eyewear. Understanding potential dangers and having adult supervision are essential to preventing eye injuries in children.

It is important for people to know how to respond properly to an eye injury. Consult your eye care professional or emergency room whenever injuries occur. Failing to get immediate, appropriate treatment could cause further damage. For example, rubbing an eye with debris in it or moving a person with a trauma to the eye can worsen the problem. Remember to always wash hands thoroughly before touching an irritated or injured eye.

Use the ideas in this section, along with the other materials in this Handbook, to help increase awareness about the importance of wearing protective eyewear to prevent eye injuries. These messages and materials will help people understand the lifelong consequences of visual impairment from eye injuries and how to prevent them.

To learn what local chapters of national ophthalmologic, optometric, professional, or volunteer organizations are already doing to develop community-wide activities and programs in your area, and to get the latest information about using protective eyewear, visit the Healthy Vision 2010 Website at www.healthyvision2010.org/.

Answering the following questions will help you to identify your target audience and opportunities to encourage people in your community to take proper precautions to prevent eye injury. Include information in your programs about how to respond appropriately to an eye injury.

Who can benefit from information about eye injuries?

Using appropriate personal protective eyewear is important for everyone in preventing eye injuries in recreational activities and around the home.

What does your audience need to know?

Nearly half of all eye injuries occur at home, and more than one-quarter occur during sporting and recreational activities, or on streets and highways. Wearing protective eyewear and getting immediate appropriate medical attention in cases of eye injuries can greatly reduce visual impairment.

Community health and eye care professionals can take the lead.

- Contact local eye health, general health, and sports organizations to see what they are doing to increase the use of protective eyewear in your community.

Ask whether they have any injury prevention or eye health materials where they could add an eye injury prevention message. Find out what other safety/injury prevention programs are active in your community and ask about including protective eyewear messages.

- Team with a Healthy Vision 2010 Consortium member in your community. Consortium members include national, state, and local representatives from the professional, voluntary, and business sectors. Consortium members have included the Healthy Vision 2010 vision objectives into their mission. You can find the membership listing at www.healthyvision2010.org. If there is not a member already in your community, complete the registration form and become one! As a member, you will receive updates on the Healthy Vision 2010 and Healthy People 2010 activities.

- Develop ideas about activities that would address current needs in your community. What kinds of eye injuries are being treated in local emergency rooms, walk-in clinics, or by local eye care professionals? See whether they are occurring disproportionately at specific times of the year, or in particular neighborhoods. See what activities are related to these injuries. Is there a large population of trades people or do-it-yourself home owners? Are pick-up games of street hockey popular?

- Learn about events that can be tailored to address specific sports or recreational activities, settings, or groups of people that can include eye injury prevention messages. Trade fairs, home expositions, and county fairs may offer opportunities to reach your target audience.

- Share your ideas with eye health providers and sports- or hobby-related groups. Include information about increasing:
  - awareness of eye safety issues
  - the use of safety glasses
  - treatment for eye injuries.
- Arrange for eye health providers or safety experts to talk with local coaches and sports, hobby, and home repair instructors to encourage the use of protective eyewear.
- Ask radio and television stations to play public service announcements. Arrange for spokespersons to appear on talk shows.
- Create a poster using the print PSA in this handbook, or print the PSA to use as flyers to distribute in gyms; sports facilities; and sporting goods, gardening, and home repair supply stores.
- Ask newspapers and community or employee newsletters to print articles about eye safety and the use of protective eyewear.
- Collaborate with trade shows and events marketing tools and other home improvement equipment.

Teachers, coaches, trainers, instructors, and playground, school bus, and recreation supervisors can help.

- Add materials that highlight risks to eye health and ways to minimize eye injuries to health and physical education curricula.
- Implement a recreational eye safety equipment program in team and intramural athletic programs.

- Include eye safety messages in auto repair, gardening, and sports classes.
- Include eye safety information at sign-ups for sports teams and day camps.
- Post eye safety messages at playgrounds to remind children and the adults who supervise them about eye injury hazards.
- Require the use of protective eyewear in shop classes and chemistry labs.

Volunteer organizations that provide home maintenance or improvements; build playgrounds; or participate in municipal parks cleanup, maintenance, and beautification projects can make people aware.

- Emphasize how simple environmental modifications can help prevent eye injuries.
- Work with local public service organizations that have a vision program to take a more active role in helping to decrease preventable eye injuries.
- Make sure that all regular workers and volunteers in the program have properly fitting protective eyewear appropriate for the job. Encourage them to make eye safety a habit at home, too. Make copies of the brochure in this Handbook for workers to take home to their families.
- Post signs in playgrounds where you perform community service, warning of potential hazards from thrown objects and other playground equipment.
- Display a sign in work areas at remodeling projects, reminding home owners to use protective eyewear.

Sporting and athletic clubs, recreational parks, and vocational and continuing education programs can set eye safety standards.

- Require protective eyewear as part of standard equipment.

- Emphasize the availability of inexpensive eye protection devices.
- Support the role of athletic trainers as the bridge between eye care professionals and athletes.
- Present information about eye safety at staff meetings and training seminars. The PowerPoint presentation on the Healthy Vision 2010 Website can help.
- Include standards for appropriate protective eyewear recommended for various activities in the list of tools and equipment needed.
- Post eye safety messages and standards for the appropriate protective eyewear in facilities.
- Encourage participants to wear protective eyewear. Provide protective eyewear if participants do not bring their own.
- Set the example for participants by wearing the appropriate protective eyewear at all times.
- Prepare for accidents by knowing the appropriate emergency procedures for the types of eye injuries that occur in your environment.

Parents, faith communities, cultural organizations, neighborhood watch, and other neighborhood and community organizations can encourage others.

- Sponsor a presentation by an eye care specialist on eye safety. This presentation can apply to most groups, organizations, or businesses.
- Remind your loved ones that you expect them to use appropriate protective eyewear whenever they engage in activities that carry some risk of eye injury.
- Add protective eyewear messages to your neighborhood newsletter, block party, or community picnic announcement.

- Be sure everyone in your activity is wearing the appropriate protective eyewear.

Businesses can play an important role

- Implement an employer-employee eye injury prevention campaign.
- Display and demonstrate protective glasses, devices, and safety tips at home repair supply stores.
- Provide financial or in-kind support for protective eyewear and/or demonstrations of the appropriate type and fit of protective eyewear for schools, vocational classes, and public service volunteers.
- Post information about the type of protective eyewear recommended for various tools and activities.
- Print the newsletter story or the print PSAs in this Handbook in your shopping circular or newsletter. Play the radio PSA on your audio system.
- Sponsor placement of the radio PSA on a popular radio station, or the print PSA in a local publication that reaches the target audience.
- Offer to help other groups with their events and activities. Identify all organizations participating in eye safety activities. Encourage your employees to volunteer.

Share in the Success of Healthy Vision 2010

Others can learn from the activities you develop. Report your activities to your local community organizer, and visit the Healthy Vision 2010 Website at www.healthyvision2010.org to share your efforts and successes. Also use the Website to learn what others are doing to help reduce visual impairment due to glaucoma. Thank you for your efforts.

Some Simple Steps:

- Keep track of the following:
  - Number and type of materials distributed.
  - Number of people participating.
  - Number and type of inquiries received about protective eyewear.
  - Increase in the use of protective eyewear.
  - Media coverage: Where the newsletter or stories about your event appeared.
- After the activity or event, answer the following questions:
  - What worked?
  - What challenges did you encounter?
  - What suggestions would you give to others who might plan a similar activity or event?

Facts About Protective Eyewear

Nearly half of the 2.5 million eye injuries that occur each year in the United States happen in the home. Another one-fourth of injuries are caused by sports activities. Estimates are that nearly 90 percent of all eye injuries could be prevented with appropriate precautions, including the use of protective eyewear.

What is protective eyewear?

Protective eyewear includes safety glasses and goggles, safety shields, and eye guards specially designed to provide the correct protection for a certain activity. Prescription eyeglasses, contact lenses, and sunglasses do not provide adequate protection in eye-hazardous situations.

Who needs to know about protective eyewear?

- Anyone who participates in sports
- Parents and others who care for, coach, or supervise children, especially 11- to 15-year-old males
- People who do chores around the house, yard, or garage
- People who engage in hobbies such as model building, woodworking, or painting
- People who wear glasses or contact lenses

What are the most common eye injuries?

- Impact: black eye or trauma
- Burns: chemicals, heat, water, steam, or smoke
- Scratches to the cornea (clear dome-shaped surface that covers the front of the eye) from sand, dirt, and other foreign bodies on the eye surface
- Object stuck in the eye
- Infections that can lead to vision loss

What are the causes of eye injury?

Eye injury hazards of different degrees are all around:

- Fingers and elbows of fellow players
- Fireworks operated by non-professionals
- Unsecured cans, boxes, or tools
- Clutter and uneven or slippery surfaces that can cause trips and falls
- Automobile accidents
- Flying debris from electrical tools or tires
- Chemicals used around the home, yard, garage, or shop
- Sports equipment such as bats, balls, pucks, rackets, darts, and guns (even air guns)
- Regular eyeglasses or contact lenses not shielded to prevent impact
- UV (ultraviolet) exposure from tanning beds and the sun

- Contact lenses not fitted by an eye care professional, not properly maintained, or that are shared with others

What can be done to prevent eye injuries?

- Eliminate hazards as much as possible.
- Wear protective eyewear appropriate for the activity.
- Use caution when working with home and lawn chemicals, or doing car repairs. Wash hands thoroughly before touching the eyes.
- Supervise children during sports and play.
- Keep tools in good working condition, use them with caution, and only use tools for the intended purpose.
- Teach children the proper use of sports equipment and tools.
- Avoid fireworks except at officially sanctioned exhibits performed by professionals.
- Wear seat belts.
- Use contact lenses only as prescribed by an eye care professional.

How should eye injuries be treated?

- Always consult an eye care professional before treating eye injuries
- Keep the injured person still and calm to avoid worsening the injury
- Never rub eyes with specks or other foreign material in them
- Wash hands thoroughly before touching the eye

Here is an article that you can put in your company or organization newsletter or post on your company bulletin board or Intranet.

Eye Safety Is a Year-Round Concern

Nearly 2.5 million eye injuries occur each year in the United States. Ninety percent of these injuries can be prevented through understanding safety practices and using the proper protective eyewear.

Eye injury is a leading cause of visual impairment in one eye (monocular). It ranks second only to cataract as the most common cause of visual impairment overall. Nearly half of all eye injuries occur at home. More than one-fourth occur during sporting and recreational activities, or on streets and highways.

Eye injuries can happen at any time of year. Fireworks, sports, chemicals used for cleaning and lawn care, and home and auto maintenance all carry some risk of eye injury. Blunt objects are responsible for nearly one-third of reported eye injuries, including rocks, fists, baseballs, lumber, and fishing weights. Sharp objects like knives, sticks, scissors, and screwdrivers also present eye injury hazards.

Jumping car batteries and using power tools, paints, chemical cleaners, pesticides, fertilizers, lawn mowers, and adhesives are all hazards that can cause eye injuries around the home and yard. Nearly all sports and other leisure activities carry some risk of injury, as well. Adults should be role models for the young people in their lives and use goggles, face shields, or barriers to protect their eyes.

Adults can also play an important role in preventing eye injuries in children by supervising them at play and during sports. In the 2002 National Health Interview Survey, only 15 percent of children ages 6 to 17 years reported using protective

eyewear always or most of the time when participating in activities that can cause eye injury. Only one-third of people over 15 reported using protective eyewear in the same circumstances.

Children under 15 years of age account for nearly one-third of all hospital admissions for eye trauma, and 43 percent of sports and recreational eye injuries overall. Boys ages 11 to 15 were three to five times more likely to sustain eye injuries requiring hospital treatment than were girls of the same age.

Emerging concerns include corneal ulcers caused by the improper use of decorative contact lenses that can result in vision-threatening infections. Injuries from bungee cords and laser pointers are also on the rise.

Make vision a health priority. Protect yourself and the ones you love from eye injury. Wear protective eyewear.

For more information about protective eyeware, visit the Healthy Vision 2010 Website at www.healthyvision2010.org, sponsored by the National Eye Institute (NEI) and the Healthy Vision Consortium.

The NEI conducts and supports research that leads to sight-saving treatment and plays a key role in reducing visual impairment and blindness. The NEI is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Radio Public Service Announcement

Home Eye Injury
Radio PSA: 30-second spot

“The Correct Eyewear Can Save Your Sight”

Station announcer:

Did you know that you can injure your eyes doing everyday chores at home like cleaning, yard work, and jump-starting a car? You can injure your eyes playing sports and enjoying recreational activities...indoors and outdoors.

Almost all eye injuries can be prevented with the use of the correct protective eyewear.

Make vision a health priority in and around your home. Be sure your family uses protective eyewear.

A message from [insert the name of the sponsoring organization].

Print Public Service Announcement

Add your logo and copy this brochure to hand out at your events, or add an address on the back and mail it out.

For more information about protective eyewear, visit the Healthy Vision Website at www.healthyvision2010.org/.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health
National Eye Institute

Healthy People 2010 Vision

Don't Lose Sight of Eye Injury. Use Protective Eyewear.

Are you at risk for eye injury?

Just about everyone is at risk for eye injuries at home, around the yard and garage, and while playing sports. Infection caused by improper use, care, or sharing of contact lenses is an emerging eye health concern.

Of the nearly 2.5 million eye injuries that occur each year in the United States, almost half occur at home and about one-fourth occur during recreational activities, or on streets and highways. Ninety percent of these injuries can be prevented by employing eye safety measures and by using proper protective eyewear.

Do you need to use protective eyewear?

You probably engage in at least one activity that calls for protective eyewear, such as using:

- Cleaning chemicals
- Lawn and garden pesticides
- Tools and hobby materials
- Home, yard, and auto tools and equipment

Nearly all sports carry some risk of eye injury, especially those that use balls, bats, sticks, fishing weights, and other equipment that can strike your eyes.

What can you do to prevent children's eye injuries?

High energy levels, inventive play, and curiosity can put children at increased risk for eye injuries. Supervise children carefully and avoid toys and activities that include flying objects. Be sure they have and wear the right protective eyewear for sports and play. Discourage risky behaviors such as sharing cosmetic contact lenses.

How can you protect yourself against eye injury?

Most eye injuries can be prevented. Minimize eye safety hazards around your home. Be a good role model for the younger people in your life by working safely. Use tools, equipment, and chemicals correctly. Wear the correct protective eyewear for your activity. Most eye injuries happen to people whose eyes are not protected.

Healthy Vision 2010 Toolkit

The Healthy Vision 2010 Toolkit is an interactive CD-ROM that includes Handbooks, the Community Action Guide, and the Speaker's Guide. These resources also are available on the Web at www.healthyvision2010.org/, and are targeted to those who want to make vision a health priority in their communities.

- **The Handbooks** each focus on a different Healthy Vision 2010 objective. They include community-based activity suggestions, newspaper/newsletter articles, public service announcements, and brochures to copy and to hand out.

- **The Community Action Guide** includes a planning timeline, media materials, tips for involving your community, and more.

- **The Speaker's Guide** contains presentations to engage and inform communities about eye health. PowerPoint, Word, and Acrobat versions of each presentation, along with speaker's notes, are included. Topics include injury and safety, eye disease, vision rehabilitation, and others.

Healthy Vision 2010 Objectives

Healthy People 2010, the prevention framework of the Nation, challenges individuals, communities, and professionals to take specific steps to ensure that good health and long life are enjoyed by all. Healthy Vision 2010 refers to the vision objectives in Focus Area 28 of Healthy People 2010.

Following are the 10 vision objectives:

28-1 Increase the proportion of persons who have a dilated eye examination at appropriate intervals.
28-2 Increase the proportion of preschool children aged 5 years and under who receive vision screening.
28-3 Reduce uncorrected visual impairment due to refractive errors.
28-4 Reduce blindness and visual impairment in children and adolescents aged 17 years and under.
28-5 Reduce visual impairment due to diabetic retinopathy.
28-6 Reduce visual impairment due to glaucoma.
28-7 Reduce visual impairment due to cataract.
28-8 Reduce occupational eye injury.
28-9 Increase the use of appropriate personal protective eyewear in recreational activities and hazardous situations around the home.
28-10 Increase vision rehabilitation.
28-10a Increase the use of rehabilitation services by persons with visual impairments.
28-10b Increase the use of visual and adaptive devices by persons with visual impairments.

For copies and information, please visit www.healthyvision2010.org/.