

CHILDREN'S EYE SAFETY

CHILDREN'S EYE SAFETY MONTH

80% of what children learn is acquired through visual processing.



The American Optometric Association supports a comprehensive professional eye examination performed by an eye doctor at age 6 months, 3 years and 5 years for all children

Since August has arrived and a new school year is about to begin, Friends for Sight wants you to make sure to include an eye examination as part of your back to school check list. As part of Child Eye Health and Safety Month, in addition to immunizations and school orientations, it is highly recommended your child receive an eye examination before going back to school. The inability to see clearly affects not only academic performance but also athletics and self-esteem. Start the new school year out right by making sure that your student is seeing clearly!

Common signs of vision troubles in children include: frequently rubbing eyes, squinting, tilting or turning head to look at objects, wandering eyes, or squeezing eyes. If your child displays any of these symptoms, please schedule an appointment to have their eyes checked.

**1 in 4 children has
A VISION PROBLEM**



Vision Screenings

A vision screening (whether conducted by a primary care physician, a school nurse, or in a community-based setting) is not a diagnostic process and does not replace a comprehensive examination by an eye doctor; but it is an appropriate and essential element of a strong public health approach to vision care. The purpose of vision screening is to increase the number of individuals in need of care who ultimately receive comprehensive eye exams and necessary treatment.

What a screening does:

- Identifies subjects at high risk for eye disease or in need of a professional eye examination by conducting screening tests
- May detect disorders in an early, treatable stage

- Provides the public with valuable information and education about eye care
- May result in a referral to an eye care professional or primary care provider

What a screening does not do:

- Diagnose a vision disorder
- Lead to a treatment plan

The purpose of a vision screening is to identify vision problems in a treatable stage, provide education, and provide a referral to an eye care provider for a comprehensive eye exam (if needed). The vision screening should be conducted by an individual that has completed a training and certification program from a recognized certifying agency (Prevent Blindness). The screening must include use of age-appropriate, scientifically validated devices/approaches, provide understandable results to the person (or caretakers of the person) being screened, and have a defined follow-up to care component to ensure follow-through on the referral.

Eye Exams

An eye exam diagnoses eye disorders and diseases and prescribes treatment. A comprehensive eye examination is generally understood to include an evaluation of the refractive state, dilated fundus examination, visual acuity, ocular alignment, binocular vision, and color vision testing where appropriate

Do children need sunglasses?

Yes. Children are at special risk from the harmful effects of UV rays, since their eyes do not have the same ability as adults to protect from UV radiation.

Here are some helpful suggestions for choosing sunglasses for children:

- Check to make sure the sunglasses fit well and are not damaged,
- Choose sunglasses that fit your child's lifestyle – the lenses should be impact resistant and should not pop out of the frames,
- Choose lenses that are large enough to shield the eyes from most angles.
- Find a wide-brimmed hat for your child to wear along with the sunglasses. This will give your child extra protection against the sun.
- **Wearing a hat can cut the amount of UV rays that reach the eyes in half.**

Like adults, children should wear brimmed caps and sunglasses that screen out 99 to 100% of UV rays.



Vision can effect sports performance too!

- | **Hand-eye Coordination**
- | **Depth Perception**
- | **Eye Tracking Ability**

Eye safety is just as important as eye health.

Every year thousands of children sustain an eye injury - 90 percent of which can be prevented if suitable protective eyewear is used. From sports and recreation, to toys and fireworks, an eye injury can happen at any time and provide protective eyewear, as corrective lenses do not protect the eye; most protective eyewear is made from a lightweight polycarbonate and is activity-specific. If your child should experience an eye injury, DO NOT allow child to rub or touch the eye, DO NOT apply medication to the eye, and DO NOT attempt to remove any debris from the eye. If the eye injury is caused by a chemical in the eye, flush the eye with water. For all eye injuries seek medical attention immediately.

Sports Related Eye Injuries

More than 25,000 people seek treatment for sports-related eye injuries each year. The good news is that almost all of these injuries can be prevented. Whatever your game, whatever your age, you need to protect your eyes!

Take the following steps to avoid sports eye injuries:

- Wear proper safety goggles (lensed polycarbonate protectors) for racquet sports or basketball. In order to be assured that your eyes are protected, it is important that any eye guard or sports protective eyewear are labeled as ASTM F803 approved. This eyewear is performance tested to give you the highest levels of protection.
 - Use batting helmets with polycarbonate face shields for youth baseball.
 - Use helmets and face shields approved by the U.S. Amateur Hockey Association when playing hockey.
 - Know that regular glasses don't provide enough protection
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Each year, thousands of [eye injuries](#) could be prevented if more people would wear [safety glasses](#) or protective eyewear.



- **Look for comfort features such as the hypoallergenic frame material and shock-absorption padding in these Rec Specs goggles. They come in various colors, and some styles work with prescription lenses and helmets.**
- Eye injuries happen all too frequently when adults and kids are enjoying sports or working around the home. Children are especially vulnerable to eye injuries because they often don't consider that their eyes, and possibly a lifetime of healthy vision, are at stake.

- According to Prevent Blindness America, approximately 40,000 sports-related eye injuries each year in the United States are severe enough to require emergency room care — that's one every 13 minutes!
- And experts agree that 90 percent of these injuries could easily be prevented by wearing protective eyewear. For children, eye injuries happen mainly during sports and other active play. Kids should wear eye protection for the following sports and recreational activities:
- Paintball games also can be dangerous and are a growing cause of eye injuries among children and young adults. [Read more about [paintball eye injuries](#).]

Lead By Example: Wear Safety Glasses And Sports Eyewear

- Perhaps the best way to encourage your kids to wear protective eyewear is to lead by example and wear it yourself.
- For instance, invest in modern wraparound safety glasses for yourself and your children, and put on this eyewear whenever you play sports or work with tools or power equipment. Insist that your kids follow your example.
- **Let Your Children Choose Their Protective Eyewear**
- When shopping for safety glasses and protective eyewear, let your child choose the style he or she prefers (as long as it provides the eye protection they need).



- **Swim goggles with polycarbonate lenses protect your child's eyes from pool chemicals, water-borne microorganisms and the sun's UV rays. You can even get them with prescription lenses.**

- Seek the advice of a professional [optician](#) to make sure the eyewear fits well and provides the amount of protection needed for the sports and activities your child participates in.
 - Protective eyewear for sports like baseball, hockey and lacrosse should include a polycarbonate face mask or wire shield.
 - Eyewear for other sports — including basketball, soccer, hockey and tennis — should feature wraparound polycarbonate lenses or side shields. [Read about [fitting sports eyewear to your child's face](#).]
 - Protective eyewear can be purchased with prescription lenses from an eye care practitioner so children requiring a correction for [nearsightedness](#), [farsightedness](#) or [astigmatism](#) can see clearly during their favorite sports without risk of eye injuries.
 - **Other Considerations When Purchasing Protective Eyewear For Kids**
 - Lens materials matter when choosing protective eyewear. [Trivex](#) and [polycarbonate lenses](#) are considerably more shatter-resistant than standard plastic lenses, making them the best choice for safety and sports eyewear. In addition to providing superior eye protection, these lenses also are lighter than plastic lenses for greater comfort.
 - Protective eyewear also is essential for skiing and other outdoor sports. Ultraviolet (UV) rays and excessive sunlight bouncing off snow and ice can lead to a painful sunburn of the eyes.
 - Long-term exposure to UV rays has been associated with **cataracts** and **macular degeneration** later in life.
 - To protect your child's eyes from both the short-term and long-term dangers of the sun's harmful UV rays, make sure their sport sunglasses and ski goggles provide 100 percent UV protection. [Read more about [UV rays and your eyes](#).]
 - Finally, research suggests that, in addition to the sun's UV rays, high-energy visible [blue light](#) emitted by the sun and also by the screens of computers and other digital devices could have long-term damaging effects on our eyes.
 - To protect your child's eyes from both UV and blue light indoors and outside, consider polycarbonate lens. These light-sensitive lenses are clear indoors, darken automatically in sunlight, and provide 100 percent UV protection and ample protection from blue light at all times.
 - Photochromic lenses also are very convenient because they reduce the need for a separate pair of prescription sunglasses. Ask your optician to show you a sample.
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<https://www.preventblindness.org/your-childs-sight>

<https://www.allaboutvision.com/safety/>

<https://www.preventblindness.org/fact-sheets>

<https://www.allaboutvision.com/cvs/children-computer-vision-syndrome.htm>

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