

Prevent Blindness Asks Kids and Adults to Make Eye Protection Part of the Uniform While Playing Sports

Prevent Blindness Northeast Region Declares September as Sports Eye Safety Month In an Effort to Help Keep Athlete's Eyes Healthy

According to the National Eye Institute, every 13 minutes an emergency room in the United States treats a sports-related eye injury. And, eye injuries are the leading cause of blindness in children in the United States, while most eye injuries among kids aged 11 to 14 occur while playing sports. Fortunately, many injuries may be avoided by wearing proper eye protection.

Prevent Blindness, Northeast Region, has declared September as Sports Eye Safety Month to help educate the public on the best ways to keep eyes healthy while playing sports. For those who wear prescription glasses, an eye doctor can provide a prescription for safe and effective sports protective eyewear. Monocular athletes (those with only one eye that sees well) should consult an eye doctor about what sports are safe to participate in.

The first step towards preventing eye injuries from sports should be a visit to an eye-care professional. An eye-care expert can recommend the best types of eye protection based on the sport and an individual's eye-care needs.

Eye injuries from any sport may include infection, corneal abrasions, fracture of the eye socket, swollen or detached retinas or a traumatic cataract. Eye injuries from water sports may include eye infections and irritations, and scratches or trauma from other swimmers.

If an eye injury does occur, Prevent Blindness provides the following recommendations.

For foreign objects in the eye:

- **Do not** rub the eye.
- Try to let tears wash the speck out or use a commercial eyewash.
- Try lifting the upper eyelid outward. Look down over the lower lid.
- **Do not** use tweezers or other items to try and remove the speck.
- If the speck doesn't wash out, see an eye doctor immediately.

For blows to the eye:

- **Apply a cold compress without pressure.**
- **Seek emergency medical care in cases of pain, blurry vision, one eye sticking out more than the other, blood inside the eye, or discoloration (black eye), which could mean internal eye damage.**

For cuts and punctures of the eye and eyelid:

- **Do not wash out the eye with water or any other liquid.**
- **Do not try to remove an object that is stuck in the eye.**
- **Cover the eye with a rigid shield or the bottom half of a paper cup without pressure. Secure the shield or cup to the brow above the eye and the cheekbone below the eye without putting pressure on the eye.**
- **Seek emergency medical care immediately.**

Liberty Sport, Prevent Blindness and Prevent Blindness Northeast region, are once again partnering during September's Sports Eye Safety Month. To download free materials, including the Sports Eye Safety Guide, visit:

<https://www.libertsport.com/sports-eye-safety-guide>.

For additional educational tools on the importance of eye safety during sports, contact Angela Gerber, Liberty Sport, at (973) 882-0986 x972 or agerber@libertsport.com.

For more information on sports eye injury prevention, please visit our website:

<https://childrensvision.preventblindness.org/sports-eye-safety>

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020.

Children's Vision Massachusetts, the Prevent Blindness Northeast Region, is a coalition