



Jeepers, Creepers...Protect Those Peepers!

We put our vision to the test every day. To protect our eyes—our “windows” to the world—we must adhere to important preventative safety measures.

A thorough professional exam is a must. Encourage each family member to visit an optometrist (a professional with a doctorate in eye disorders) or an ophthalmologist (a medical doctor specializing in the treatment of the eye) for an eye exam each year, every two at the least. Your vision is important—don't let problems go unnoticed!

At Home and Play

To help protect your family from harm, the American Optometric Association and the American Academy of Ophthalmology offer some general eye-safety tips:

- **Ultraviolet (UV) Radiation:** When outdoors, always wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses that block 99-100% of UV-A and UV-B rays. Exposure to UV radiation over time has been proven to increase your chance of “clouding of the eye's lens” (known as cataracts) and damage to the retina (the nerve-rich lining of the eye used for sight). The effects of UV radiation are cumulative. The more your eyes are exposed, the greater your risk of developing these conditions.
- **Computer Use:** To alleviate computer-related eyestrain, make adjustments to your workstation. Position your eyes approximately 20”-26” away from your monitor. Choose a monitor that tilts or swivels and has both contrast and brightness controls. Select an adjustable chair. Modify lighting to eliminate reflections or glare. Take periodic breaks and blink often to avoid dry eyes.
- **Lawn Work:** When tending to the lawn, it's important to remember eye protection. In addition, always check for rocks and debris. These become dangerous projectiles when shot from the blades of lawn movers and trimmers.
- **Household Chemicals:** Be careful when working with household chemicals, as many can burn your eye's delicate tissues. Always wear eye protection, read instructions carefully, work in well-ventilated areas and make sure nozzles are pointed away from you.
- **Sports:** Don't forget the appropriate protective eyewear when playing sports such as basketball, baseball, racquet games, football, hockey, lacrosse, skiing and paintball.

In the Workplace

Each day an estimated 1,000 eye injuries occur in the workplace. This impacts not only employees, but also businesses through lost production, medical expenses and worker's compensation.

The following are several tips adapted from Prevent Blindness America for helping to reduce eye-related injuries at your job:

- **Assess the Situation:** Conduct a thorough eye hazard analysis. Inspect work areas and review accident and injury reports to identify potentially hazardous operations.
- **Vision Test:** Uncorrected vision problems contribute to accidents. Include vision testing in your pre-placement and require routine physical examination of employees.
- **Protect Employees:** Select protective eyewear designed for specific operations or hazards. Whatever protection you choose, make sure it complies with current standards.
- **Fit Properly:** Ensure that protective eyewear is properly fitted. Enlist the services of an eye care professional or someone comparably trained. Inspect eye protection daily and provide the proper means for maintenance.
- **Plan for an Emergency:** Establish first-aid procedures for eye injuries. Make eye wash stations accessible, particularly where chemicals are used. Train employees in first-aid and identify those



with more advanced training.

- **Educate and Train:** Educate employees about the importance of protective eyewear. Conduct ongoing programs to establish, maintain and reinforce the need. Add eye safety to your employee training programs and include it as a part of new employee orientation.
- **Get Support:** Management support is the key. Encourage management personnel to set an example and use protective eyewear when and where required.
- **Put it in Writing:** Record your protective eyewear policy. Display a copy for all employees to see.

For more information:

Prevent Blindness America, <http://www.preventblindness.org>

American Academy of Ophthalmology, <http://www.eyenet.org>

American Optometric Association, <http://www.aoanet.org>

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