

# Preventing sports-related eye injuries

Each year, more than 13,000 children suffer sports-related eye injuries, and most of those injuries are preventable with proper eye protection.

## Types of injuries

Most sports injuries happen in baseball and basketball, but hockey, lacrosse, tennis, wrestling, football and soccer are also high risk. Most often, an eye injury occurs when a ball, bat, finger or elbow strikes the child's face.

**Common symptoms of an eye injury are pain, eye redness, and blurred or double vision.**

Depending on the impact, injuries may range from relatively minor to severe:

- **Eyelid scratches and bruising**
- **Bone fractures around the eye**
- **Nerve or muscle damage**
- **Cuts/scratches on the eye, bleeding inside the eye** (hyphema) or **retinal detachment** (signs include floaters, reduced vision, light sensitivity)

## Eye protection tips

**Schedule an eye exam** before they start a sport. If they can't see, they can't duck the puck or dodge the ball.

**Pick sport-specific eye guards.** It is important that the guard fits your child.

**Buy prescription glasses made of polycarbonate plastic,** which is 10 times more impact-resistant than regular lenses.

**For contact sports, choose eye guards/glasses with padding at the nose and brow.**

## Do not delay treatment



**Do not apply any pressure on the injured eye or allow your child to rub their eyes.** Contact your doctor immediately for medical guidance. The earlier that a child is seen and treated, the better their chances of recovery. If left untreated, serious injuries can lead to permanent loss of vision or loss of the eye itself. If more advanced care is required, you will be referred to a specialist.

## The importance of protective eyewear

Wearing protective eyewear is the most effective way to prevent sports-related eye injuries. Since most youth sports leagues do not require eye protection, it is up to parents and coaches to encourage players to use them. And the more children see their peers wearing them, the more likely they are to use them too.

