



Eye on Health

Preventing Eye Emergencies

(NAPSA)—Be on a sharp lookout to avoid blinding eye injuries. The eye is one of the most delicate and exposed areas of the human body. Eye injury is the second most common cause of visual impairment, second only to glaucoma. Blunt objects, surprisingly, are the major cause of eye injury (37 percent) and over half (55 percent) of eye injury victims are people under the age of 25.

“Emergency departments in the United States provide a large amount of eye care because all eye injuries are potentially serious,” said David Wilcox, MD, of the American College of Emergency Physicians. “Even superficial abrasions on the eye’s surface—the cornea—can lead to scarring or infection, with possible impairment of vision.”

If an eye injury occurs, seek immediate medical care. To help decrease your risk of eye injury or wounds, ACEP provides the following tips:

Signs and Symptoms of Eye Injury and Wounds

- A visible wound.
- A bloodshot eye appearance, even if a wound is not visible.
- Partial or total loss of vision.
- Leakage of blood or clear fluid from the injured eye.

Precautions to Take:

- DO NOT touch the eye or allow the victim to rub it.
- DO NOT try to remove a contact lens or embedded object in the eye.
- DO NOT apply any pressure to an eye with a foreign object embedded or a laceration.
- IF it will take some time to obtain medical aid, gently bandage an eye with an eye shield or tape a paper cup in place over the injured eye.
- IF a chemical enters the eye,



irrigate it immediately before rushing to the emergency department. Flush the eye with fresh water for 15 minutes and put nothing else in the injured eye. If possible, take the bottled chemical with you to the hospital.

Action Steps

- Lay the victim on her back, holding her head on your knees to keep it as still as possible.
 - Give the victim a paper cup to hold over her injured eye and ask her to keep her uninjured eye closed.
 - Send the victim to the hospital. If you cannot take the victim to the hospital, call the emergency medical services number or 9-1-1.
- “Parents, coaches and role models should set good examples for children by wearing protective eyewear when using power tools, playing sports or working in an area with flying debris,” said Dr. Wilcox. “They also should enforce the use of protective eyewear in children.”

For more information of emergency first aid, you can order ACEP’s First Aid Manual from www.ACEP.org.