Sports-Related Eye Injuries: What You Need to Know and Tips for Prevention
Sports and Eye Injuries

• Eye injuries are the leading cause of blindness in children.
• Every 13 minutes, an ER in the United States treats a sports-related eye injury.
• Most eye injuries among kids aged 11 to 14 occur while playing sports.
Sports and Eye Injuries

- Baseball is a leading cause of eye injuries in children 14 and under.
- Basketball is a leading cause of eye injuries among 15- to 24-year-olds.
Financial Cost of Eye Injuries

• Sports-related eye injuries represent a significant eye health hazard worldwide.
• Sports-related eye injuries cost $175 to $200 million a year.
• Hockey face protectors have saved society $10 million a year.
• Use of protective eyewear can decrease insurance costs.
Eye Exams

• A comprehensive eye exam is important for everyone.
• Exams may detect pre-existing eye conditions in athletes.
• Not all athletes have had their eyes examined.
Health Providers Should Advise

- Family physicians, ophthalmologists, optometrists, and other health care providers play a critical role in advising patients to use protective eyewear.
Sports with the Highest Rates of Eye Injuries

- Baseball/Softball
- Ice Hockey
- Racquet Sports
- Basketball
Sports with the Highest Rates of Eye Injuries

- Fencing
- Lacrosse
- Paintball
- Boxing
Protective Eyewear

- Protective eyewear may prevent 90 percent of sports-related eye injuries.
- Experts agree that protective eyewear must meet ASTM standards.
Protective Eyewear

• All kids need protective eyewear.
• Ordinary prescription glasses do not provide adequate protection.
• Eyewear should be sport-specific and sit comfortably on the face.
• Protective eyewear is usually made of polycarbonate.
Benefits of Protective Eyewear

• Many sports-related eye injuries result in permanent vision loss.
• Protective eyewear will keep you in the game rather than on the bench with an eye injury.
Keeping Eyes Safe

• Talk to your eye care provider about the appropriate type of protective eyewear for your sport.
• Have an eye exam.
Resources

- Kids’ Website: http://isee.nei.nih.gov
- Webpage for Parents, Coaches, and Teachers: www.nei.nih.gov/sports
For More Information

Visit the Organizational Resources section on the Healthy Vision 2010 Website for additional materials and programs.

www.healthyvision2010.org/safety/eyewear.asp#orgs