Sports-Related Eye Injuries: What You Need to Know and Tips for Prevention
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.
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: http://www.nei.nih.gov/sports