

Sports Eye Safety Month (Apr. 1st -30th)

4/21/2011

As well as being Women's Eye Safety Month, April is also shared with Sports Eye Safety Month. The latter will be the focus of our second April news release. So whether you play sports or you have children that do, below you will find information to keep your eyes safe during athletic adventures.

An estimated 40,000 sports eye injuries occur every year – the majority of the victims are children, too many of whom suffer permanent visual impairment. For young athletes, baseball and basketball account for the largest number of injuries. Little league pitchers may throw the ball up to 70 mph, fast enough to break bones and do serious damage to the eye. In basketball, you can't prevent contact with flying elbows and fingers, but the serious eye injuries they can cause can be prevented by wearing appropriate protective eyewear. Many other sports, such as tennis, soccer and football, golf, water sports and hockey, also put unprotected players at risk for serious eye injury.

Specific eyewear is available for just about all activities. Your Eye Doctor can recommend the appropriate eyewear for your sport. Most protective eyewear, including goggles, face shields and guards should be made of polycarbonate plastic. It is also important that protective eyewear be fitted by and eye care professional as regular street glasses and contacts do not offer enough protection for sports.

Many children's sports leagues, schools and teams don't require children to wear eye protection. Parents must insist that children wear eye protection every time they play and set a good example by wearing eye protection themselves when they play. One-eyed athletes need to be especially careful by wearing eye protection at all times during sport and recreational activities.

Important Note: There is no evidence that wearing eye protection hampers athletic performance. Many famous athletes, including NBA All-Star Kareem

Abdul-Jabbar and NFL Hall of Famer Eric Dickerson, have excelled in their respective sports while wearing protective eyewear.

Simply put, it is a **fact** that if you play sports you can get hurt.