

# Vision Health and Safety

*Early diagnosis and treatment have been shown to prevent vision loss in more than 90 percent of patients.*

The eye is a complex organ made of several parts including the iris, cornea, pupil, lens, retina and optic nerve—our ability to see requires all these parts working together.

Many eye diseases and disorders have no symptoms or early warning signs, in which case early detection is the key to minimizing vision loss. Dilated eye exams should be performed as recommended by your eye care professional to detect changes in the retina or optic nerve.

Many of us will experience temporary eye problems from time to time, including itching, blurriness or fatigue, and most of these conditions are short-lived and will probably go away on their own without complications. However, sudden eye problems and those that last for more than a couple of days should be checked by an eye doctor. Some common eye problems that should be checked out if they continue are eye twitching, itchy eyes, blurry vision, tired eyes, or seeing “floaters”.

More serious eye conditions include glaucoma, cataracts and diabetic retinopathy, all of which can lead to vision loss. The only treatment is to have the lens surgically removed and replaced with an artificial lens. Eye emergencies that require immediate treatment are sudden loss of vision, pain in or around the eye, flashing lights or “floaters”, or waking up with a red, sensitive eye after sleeping in contacts. These

symptoms could indicate a retinal tear, a corneal ulcer, or an infection.

Knowing what to do for an eye emergency can save valuable time and possibly prevent vision loss. Here are some instructions for basic eye injury first aid:

- Wear eye protection for all hazardous activities and sports—at school, home, and on the job.
- Stock a first aid kit with a rigid eye shield and commercial eyewash before an eye injury happens.
- DO NOT assume that any eye injury is harmless. When in doubt, see a doctor immediately.

## **In all cases of eye contact with chemicals:**

- Immediately flush the eye with water or any other drinkable liquid. Hold the eye under a faucet or shower, or pour water into the eye using a clean container. Keep the eye open and as wide as possible while flushing. Continue flushing for at least 15 minutes.
- If a contact lens is in the eye, begin flushing over the lens immediately. This may wash away the lens.
- DO NOT bandage the eye.
- Seek immediate medical treatment after flushing.

## **Specks in the Eye**

- DO NOT rub the eye.
- Try to let tears wash the speck out or use an eye wash.

*(Continued)*

**For more information, please call: 877.289.9109**  
**or visit [www.healthytogether.net/mississippi](http://www.healthytogether.net/mississippi)**

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- Try lifting the upper eyelid outward and down over the lower lid.
- If the speck does not wash out, keep the eye closed, bandage it lightly, and see a doctor.

### Blows to the Eye

- Apply a cold compress without putting pressure on the eye. Crushed ice in a plastic bag can be taped to the forehead to rest gently on the injured eye.
- In cases of pain, reduced vision, or discoloration (black eye), seek emergency medical care. Any of these symptoms could mean internal eye damage.
- DO NOT try to remove an object that is stuck in the eye.
- Cover the eye with a rigid shield without applying pressure.
- See a doctor at once.

Source:

[www.preventblindness.org/eye\\_tests/index.html](http://www.preventblindness.org/eye_tests/index.html); [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/projects/vision.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/projects/vision.htm);  
[www.howstuffworks.com/question126.htm](http://www.howstuffworks.com/question126.htm); [www.preventblindness.org/safety/firstaid.html](http://www.preventblindness.org/safety/firstaid.html)

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