

Protecting children's eyesight

Eye injuries in children are common and often preventable. Taking simple steps to reduce risks can help protect your child's eyesight. As well as affecting vision, eye injuries can also impact a child's confidence and well-being. Preventing injuries helps children feel safe, secure and able to take part in everyday activities.

At home

Many eye injuries happen in and around the home. While some are minor, others can be serious. Small changes can make a big difference. You can help prevent eye injuries by:

- **Spotting hazards early** – get down to your child's height and look for objects or furniture that could cause injury
- **Covering sharp corners** – use corner protectors on tables, benches and other furniture with sharp edges
- **Choosing safer furniture** – avoid furniture with sharp corners that sit at eye level for young children
- **Teaching eye safety** – talk to children about protecting their eyes and how to safely use tools, utensils and other sharp items
- **Selecting age-appropriate toys** – choose toys that match your child's age and stage of development. Avoid toys with small or sharp parts
- **Storing chemicals safely** – keep all household chemicals and poisons stored up high and out of reach.

Outdoors and sport

Eye injuries often happen during play and sport, especially from knocks or collisions with people, balls or equipment. You can reduce the risk by:

- **Supervising play and sport** – provide close supervision when children are using bats, rackets or similar equipment
- **Using protective eyewear** – make sure protective equipment meets Australian Standards:
 - Cricket helmets with face shields: BS 7928:2013 + A1:2019
 - Squash, tennis and racquetball eyewear: AS/NZS 18527.1:2022
 - Snow sport goggles: AS/NZS 18527.2:2022
- **Being a role model** – wear protective equipment yourself to show children how important it is



First-aid

Minor eye injury

- Gently rinse the eye with clean water or saline
- Encourage your child to keep the eye still and avoid rubbing it
- If symptoms continue to worsen, lightly cover the eye and seek medical advice

Serious eye injury

- Do not remove any object stuck in the eye
- Help your child lie down and stay as still as possible. Keep them calm and reassured.
- If there is something in the eye:
 - Place soft padding around the object
 - Secure it gently without applying pressure
- Place rolled towels or blankets around your child's head to limit movement
- Call **000** immediately for an ambulance



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