
First Aid: Eye Injuries

Most eye injuries are minor, like getting soap in the eye or a speck of dirt under the eyelid. Others, like those that happen during sports activities, can be serious and require medical attention.

Signs and Symptoms

- redness
- stinging or burning
- watering
- sensitivity to light
- blurred vision
- swelling of the eyelids
- discoloration around the eye

What to Do

If you think your child has a particle in the eye or a minor irritation, be sure to:

- Wash your hands before touching the eye area.
- Flush the eye with water as soon as possible:
 - Tilt the child's head over a basin or sink with the affected eye pointed down.
 - Gently pull down the lower lid.
 - Gently pour a steady stream of lukewarm water over the eye.
- Flush the eye for up to 15 minutes, checking every 5 minutes to see if the foreign body has been flushed out.

Seek Medical Care

If Your Child Has:

- been struck in the eye with a ball or other object
- a red or irritated eye
- eye discomfort
- a swollen, red, or painful area around the eye or eyelid
- an eye that's very sensitive to light

Seek Emergency Care Immediately

If Your Child Has:

- trouble seeing
- been exposed to chemicals
- something embedded in the eye
- severe eye pain
- blood in the eye
- nausea or vomiting after an eye injury

Think Prevention!

Kids who play sports should wear protective goggles or unbreakable glasses as needed. Keep chemicals and other potentially dangerous objects out of the reach of children.

Note: All information on KidsHealth® is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor.

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