

Protect your eyes



During the summer, children love to be outside. But before kids head outdoors remember too much sun can cause eye damage. Provide your child with a hat, sunglasses, and some good advice.

Five simple steps to protect your children's eyes from the sun

1. When sitting outside, try to make sure your child does not face the sun.
2. However, if your child has to sit facing the sun, make sure he is wearing a cap or a wide-brimmed sun hat that shades his eyes.
3. Teach your child not to look directly at the sun, especially during a solar eclipse.
4. Teach your child to avoid looking directly at the sun's reflection, particularly as it reflects off snow or water.
5. Choose a good pair of sunglasses for your child.

Sun care for infants

Make sure to position your baby so the sun is not shining on his face. Always place your child's stroller in a shady area or adjust the flap to create a shadow on his face.

Choosing children's sunglasses

When shopping for sunglasses, consult an optician, optometrist or ophthalmologist to make sure the sunglasses provide enough protection against the sun's rays. The most common problem with cheaper sunglasses is they do not block enough of the sun's damaging rays.



Sun damage to the eyes

If the sun's rays penetrate the eyes directly for a prolonged length of time, there is a risk of burning the retina and leaving a large black mark on it. If this happens, your child may have a black mark in the centre of his vision for life.

Sensitivity of young eyes

Contrary to popular belief, healthy children's eyes are not more sensitive than adult eyes.

Watch out when playing sports

Today, it is mandatory for children aged six to 13 to wear protective helmets when part of an organized hockey league. But many kids still don't wear a helmet while playing hockey on the street, in the schoolyard or at rinks where there are no organized teams. Whenever and wherever your children play hockey make sure they wear a protective helmet with a visor or at the very least glasses similar to those worn by squash or badminton players.



Compressed-air guns and BB guns also cause many accidents among young people. Every year, the Ophthalmology Clinic of The Montreal Children's Hospital treats three or four teenagers who have received a shot of lead in the eye. This can cause a hemorrhage, but sometimes a patient will lose an eye. The Ophthalmology Clinic recommends that people be educated on how to use air guns or limit their use.

Watch out at home, too!

Accidents caused by scissors poked into the eye are not a common occurrence anymore, but they still happen. Children should only be given special scissors with rounded edges; sharp, pointy scissors should always be kept out of their reach. Tables with sharp corners also pose a danger. If you have a young child, it's a good idea to have tables with rounded corners in

your living room or playroom.

Household cleaning products should also be kept out of the reach of children. Drain cleaner (Drano®) and other products can cause serious eye injuries. Every year, the clinic treats cases of burns to the cornea, which can lead to loss of vision.



Contact lenses can be very helpful for visual development in infants and children. However, it is important not to skimp on maintenance. There's always a risk of devel-

oping a corneal infection when contact lenses are not cleaned as often as recommended, or if they are worn too long.

Today's televisions and computer screens do not emit as many harmful emissions as in the past. As a result, parents no longer need to be concerned about their children sitting too close to the screen.

L'Hôpital de Montréal pour enfants
The Montreal Children's Hospital



Centre universitaire de santé McGill
McGill University Health Centre

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