

Taking Care of Your Contacts

If you wear contact lenses in your eyes – either soft or hard ones – then it's important to take steps to protect the safety and health of your eyes.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends the following safe practices if you wear contact lenses:

- ◆ Wash your hands with soap and water and dry them before handling lenses.
- ◆ Wear and replace your lenses according to the schedule prescribed by your doctor.
- ◆ Follow instructions from your doctor and your solution manufacturer for cleaning and storing your lenses.
- ◆ Make sure you always use fresh solution and replenish the solution daily.
- ◆ Keep your contact lens case clean and replace it every three to six months.
- ◆ Remove the lenses and consult an ophthalmologist immediately if your eyes become red or irritated or your vision changes.
- ◆ Never share contact lenses with someone else and never put them in your mouth to "clean."

Source: American Academy of Ophthalmology, www.aao.org

Protect Your Eyes from Injuries

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, more than one million Americans suffer from some type of eye injury each year. The good news is that about 90 percent of eye injuries can be prevented if special precautions are taken.

Here are general safety tips on protecting your eyes:

- ▲ When using household chemicals – such as cleaning fluids, detergents, and ammonia – always read the instructions and labels carefully, work in a well-ventilated area, and make sure spray nozzles point away from you and others before spraying. Then, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after use.
- ▲ Before using a lawnmower, power trimmer, or edger, always check for debris. Stones, twigs, and other items can become dangerous projectiles shooting from the blades of a lawnmower and injuring your eyes or those of bystanders.
- ▲ At work, always wear the appropriate safety eyewear required for your job.
- ▲ Use caution when working on vehicles. Battery acid, sparks, and debris from damaged or improperly jumpstarted

auto batteries can damage your eyes. Store protective goggles in the trunk of your vehicle to use for emergencies and everyday repairs.

- ▲ When working in your workshop, be sure to wear proper safety glasses or goggles. Flying fragments, fumes, dust particles, sparks, ultraviolet and infrared radiation, and splashing chemicals can injure your eyes.
- ▲ Protect your eyes from harmful sun rays. Wear sunglasses that have a label that specifically states that the glasses offer 99 to 100 percent UV protection. Never assume that you'll get more UV protection from a pricier pair of sunglasses or ones with a darker tint.

Exercise eye safety precautions in sports. Wear the appropriate face-guards for your sport along with eye goggles or eye guards. An elbow, ball, foot, or finger in the eye can cause serious damage. Wear the appropriate equipment at all times.

Note: Have regular eye exams as directed by the American Academy of Ophthalmology, especially if you're at a high risk for eye disease.

For more information, visit the American Academy of Ophthalmology at www.aao.org, the National Eye Institute at www.nei.nih.gov, or Prevent Blindness America at www.preventblindness.org.

