

AthletiHINTS



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Eye injuries can be serious if untreated

Introduction

While eye injuries in sports are not common, they can be serious when they occur.

While the risk of eye injury is related to sport, most injuries can be prevented with protective eyewear.

Injuries to the eye range from foreign bodies (dirt, sand, etc.) to orbital fractures. These injuries have increased in past years due to the popularity of baseball and softball. Foreign bodies and abrasions (scratches) to the eyes are among the more common injuries during athletics.

Athletes often say they “feel something in their eye.” It is important to know that foreign bodies in the eye and abrasion injuries produce the same symptoms. These symptoms include pain, increased tearing and the sensation of something in the eye. Do not rub the eye, as this will make matters worse. Have the athlete close the eye until the initial pain subsides. Most of the time the increased tearing will “wash out” the foreign object. Rinsing with water may also help remove the foreign object.

If you try to wash out the object and it does not come out, do not try to remove it by using your fingernail, Q-tip or other small object. Cover the eye and take the athlete to the doctor or emergency room to have the object removed. Sometimes these objects can become imbedded in the eye and attempts to remove them can make matters worse.

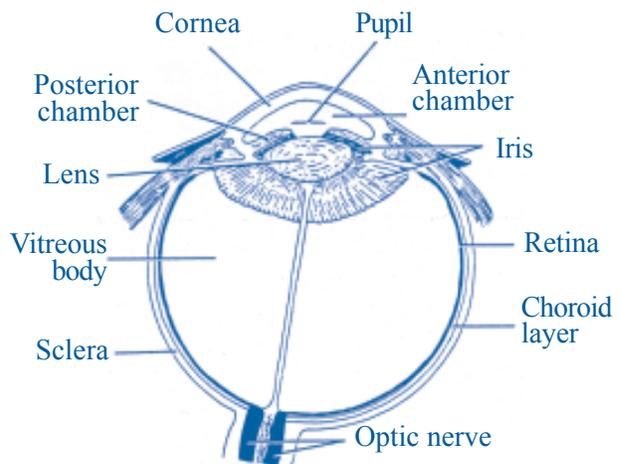
If you do remove the object and the athlete still complains of “something in there,” there may be an

abrasion of the eye. In this case, the athlete needs to see a doctor. This injury can also occur from getting “a finger in the eye.”

Even though the eye is well protected within the eye socket, it can be bruised during sports. The injury can be as mild as a bruise or as severe as an orbital fracture.

Most of the injuries to the eye are of the mild type, commonly, the “dreaded” black eye. A blow to this area can cause damage to the tissue surrounding the eye causing the black eye. Use ice after a black eye to help control swelling and pain in the area. Don't blow your nose following a black eye as this will cause increased swelling.

Over



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AthletiCare

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Symptoms that indicate a serious eye injury include: blurred vision that does not clear when blinking, loss of part or all vision in the affected eye, a sharp stabbing or throbbing pain in the eye or double vision. *If any these symptoms occur, the athlete should cover the eye and be taken to the emergency room.*

Eye injuries should be taken seriously. Athletes should not return to sports until pain-free full vision is obtained. If a physician saw the athlete, a medical clearance must be obtained to return to activity. Eye injuries are not very commonplace, but can be serious if left untreated.

Sports eye injuries in the U.S.

<i>Sport</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Baseball	27
Racquet Sports	20
Basketball	20
Football & Soccer	7
Ice Hockey	4

"Modern Principles of Athletic Training, 9th Edition" by Daniel Arnheim & William Prentice