

October 2007: Prevent Blindness America Month

Eye Injuries and Accidents Often Happen At Home

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) states that in 2006, more than 219,000 Americans went to the emergency room to be treated for eye injuries. More than half of those injuries (125,127) occurred in the home, more than any other location. When chemicals such as household cleaners, bleach and paint enter the eye, they can cause painful and serious damage. Lawn maintenance can also be hazardous to eyes as clippings from trimmers or rocks and debris thrown by lawnmowers become airborne. And those working on cars or other machinery in the garage can suffer injuries when battery acid, gasoline and other liquids splash on to the face and enter the eyes.

Fortunately, 90 percent of all eye injuries are preventable by simply wearing the proper eye protection. Safety goggles should have "ANSI Z-87" stamped on the lenses or frames, meaning they have been certified by the American National Standards Institute. After any project, make sure to wash your hands thoroughly before touching your eyes or face.

"When we perform the same chores or tasks around the house, week after week, we can get complacent about how quickly accidents can happen," said Daniel D. Garrett, senior vice president of Prevent Blindness America. "We all need to take extra care when we're at home to protect our sight and not wind up in the emergency room."

Children are also at-risk for eye injuries in the home. Everyday household items such as hangers, glue or pencils can suddenly become very dangerous, causing many accidental injuries. Injuries may include burns, contusions, abrasions or punctures.

Prevent Blindness America has the following tips for protecting children from injuries in the home:

- Teach children not to run around with forks, knives, pencils, toothbrushes, or other objects that could cause eye injury.
- Keep detergents, cleaning supplies, nail polish remover, mouthwash and cosmetics in locked cabinets or out of reach.
- Keep clothes hangers in the closet.
- Place nails, glue, screwdrivers and other tools out of reach of children.
- Keep younger children away from work areas where power tools are being used.

For more information on sports eye health and safety, please call Prevent Blindness America at 1-800-331-2020 or visit www.preventblindness.org/safety.

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