

Spring Eye Health & Safety Tips

FROM SPECTERA®, YOUR VISION PLAN

As winter melts away, we all look forward to spring weather and outdoor activities. But, the season also brings new concerns for eye health and safety.

Gardening and Yard Maintenance

One of the most pleasant aspects of spring is enjoying new flowers and plants in our yards. Yet, there are hazards to your sight among those beautiful blooms. These can include power tools, sharp branches, and chemicals in fertilizers and weed killers. For instance,



lawn trimmers injure more than 1,500 people each year. Be sure to follow all of the instructions on any tools or plant treatments you are using. Wear wrap-around safety goggles made of polycarbonate material that can protect you from flying debris and from chemicals that can splash or blow

into your eyes. Prescription glasses cannot provide the protection you need. Also wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses providing 100 per cent protection from ultraviolet light. Your family eye doctor can help you select appropriate safety eyewear, even if you wear corrective lenses. Often, bamboo and metal stakes are used to support plants like tomatoes. Cover the sharp tips of those stakes with a plastic wire nut to prevent puncture wounds. If you should suffer an eye injury, contact your eye doctor right away and follow the directions you are given to treat the injury.

Sports and Recreation

The importance of protecting vision during sports and recreational activities can't be over emphasized. About 40,000 sports injuries occur each year, many of them resulting in permanent vision loss. The good news is that about 90 per cent of sports related injuries are preventable if the right protective eyewear is worn. Baseball, a spring and summer favorite, accounts for the largest number of injuries to young athletes. Soccer and lacrosse also account for many injuries to children each year. For baseball and lacrosse, players should wear a protective helmet with a polycarbonate facemask or wire shield. For soccer, use sports goggles with polycarbonate lenses and side shields. There is no evidence that wearing eye protection hampers athletic performance. Many famous athletes, such as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Eric Dickerson have excelled in their sports while wearing protective eyewear. Once again, your family eye doctor can help you select the appropriate protective eyewear.



Allergies

For many people, the beauty of new spring growth means misery from allergies. This may include itchy, red, burning, watery eyes. Some of the triggers include pollens from grass, trees, and flowers, as well as environmental contaminants and other substances. Allergy sufferers should try to stay inside when the pollen count is especially high and use air filters indoors. Still, most of us are ready to get outside and enjoy the weather. If your eyes are affected, try not to rub them. This can make the irritation worse and increases the risk of infection. There are a number of anti-allergy medications available, both over the counter and by prescription. You can seek help from your eye doctor, who is able suggest a number of medications that may help. Some other allergy medications may cause dry eyes, especially for contacts lens wearers. If you are one of those who has this condition, your eye doctor can recommend the appropriate artificial tears or lubricants, including drops, gels, and ointments, to alleviate your suffering. The most important thing is to discuss any medications you are taking with your eye doctor.