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NEARLY HALF OF ALL EYE INJURIES OCCUR IN OR AROUND THE HOME

-Data Shows Number of Eye Injuries to Children on the Rise -

CHICAGO (Aug. 28, 2009) – There's no place like home, especially for eye injuries. In fact, more than 1.5 million eye injuries happen in the home. Performing household chores and maintenance without the proper eye protection can be dangerous. In fact, one in five at-home eye injuries were due to home repair or power tools according to results from the "Sixth Annual Eye Injury Snapshot" by the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) and the American Society of Ocular Trauma (ASOT).

Their findings showed that the most common place of injury was the yard or garden. Lawn maintenance can be hazardous to eyes as clippings from trimmers or rocks and debris thrown by lawnmowers become airborne. Bystanders must also be vigilant as they may be accidentally struck by flying debris.

Prevent Blindness America, the nation's oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization, has declared September as Home Eye Safety Awareness Month in an effort to urge the public to take extra care in protecting their eyes today in order to avoid painful and potentially blinding eye accidents.

Every year, there are more than 2.5 million eye injuries, yet 90 percent of these could have been prevented by using protective eyewear. When starting any project, whether it be cleaning surfaces with chemicals, working on the car or doing yard work, Prevent Blindness America asks everyone to wear eyewear approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The eyewear should have the "Z-87" logo stamped on the frames and can be purchased at hardware stores and home building centers.

"Serious eye injuries can be avoided by simply using the proper eye protection," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. "Adults must make their eye health a priority by consistently practicing good eye protection habits not only for their own sake but as an example to children."

Another alarming statistic from the 2009 AAO and ASOT's findings was the increase in the number of eye injuries suffered by children. According to the new data, children 12 years of age or younger represented one in five injuries, a significant increase over the previous five-year survey average of 15.5 percent.

Prevent Blindness America offers these tips on how to protect children's eyes at home:

- Teach children not to run around with forks, knives, combs or toothbrushes.
- Keep detergents, cleaning supplies, nail polish remover, mouthwash and makeup in locked cabinets or out of reach.

- Set a good example by wearing eye protection when using ammonia-based cleaning supplies or while working on projects.
- Don't allow young children to use combs, brushes or hairspray unless you watch or help them.
- Prompt others who enter the work area to wear eye protection.
- If you wear prescription glasses, many safety glasses or goggles will fit over your regular glasses. Ask your doctor what he or she recommends.

For more information on how to protect your eyes at home and eye protection recommendations, call Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020 or visit preventblindness.org.

About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, divisions and chapters, Prevent Blindness America is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call (800) 331-2020 or visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org.

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