

Quick Facts: Children's Eye Problems



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More than 12.1 million school-age children, or one in four, has a vision impairment. Among preschool-age children, more than one in 20 has a vision problem that can cause permanent sight loss if left untreated. The most common types of eye problems seen in children are:

- > Myopia (nearsightedness)
- > Strabismus (crossed eyes)
- > Amblyopia (lazy eye)

The most common causes of blindness among children are: congenital cataracts, retinopathy of prematurity and other complications caused by premature births.

Hospital emergency rooms treat thousands of children each year who suffer from eye injuries in and around the home. In general, the most common causes of eye injuries to children age 14 and younger are caused by:

- > Toys not suitable for the child's age or abilities, and broken toys
- > Pens and Pencils
- > Adhesives
- > General Household Cleaners
- > Furniture
- > Flatware and Table Settings
- > Non-Cosmetic Bleaches
- > Cigarettes, Cigars, Pipes, Lighters
- > Grooming Products, Cosmetics (Hair Care, Makeup)
- > Paper and Cardboard Products



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Quick Facts: Children's Eye Problems—Continued

Each year, thousands of children suffer serious eye injuries while participating in sports. Wearing protective eyewear can help prevent nearly all of these injuries. The sports associated with the most injuries in children age 14 and younger:

- > Baseball/Softball
- > Water and Pool Activities
- > Guns—Air, Gas, Spring, BB
- > Basketball
- > Ball Sports (unspecified)
- > Bicycles
- > Football
- > Winter Sports (Skiing, Hockey, Ice Skating, Snowmobiling, etc.)
- > Racquet Sports

About 90% of all eye injuries and 50% of all cases of blindness are preventable. You can help protect your child's sight by being aware of risks and taking proper precautions.

A child's eyes should be checked shortly after birth, before starting school (age 3 or 4), and throughout the school years as needed.

Regular eye care is important even when your child shows no signs of eye trouble.

For a free copy of Prevent Blindness America's *Children's Eye Health Position Statement*, call 800.331.2020 or visit PreventBlindness.org.

