



North Shore Eye Centre

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LIVING WITH ONE GOOD EYE

No matter at what age vision is lost in one eye, a person can still live a full productive and personally satisfying life. Older children and adults will go through a re-adjustment period after suddenly losing vision in one eye. Children growing up with vision in only one eye develop and learn along with children of the same age.

Causes of vision loss

The leading causes of vision loss from childhood through middle adult life are eye injuries. The most common cause of blindness in later life is glaucoma, diabetes or macular degeneration.

In developing countries and worldwide cataract is by far the commonest cause. It is extremely important to prevent vision in the good eye, once there is blindness in the other eye. Protection of the good eye cannot be stressed enough!

Protection of the good eye

Everyday protection should be worn at all times. A sufficient protection is impact-resistant spectacles with sturdy frames and these should be worn equally during work, play and sports, if there is a risk of eye injury. It is recommended to use Polycarbonate lenses as they are made of very strong material. Protective eyeglasses should be worn, even if no prescription is necessary for correction of vision. Contact lenses do not offer the same protection.



Figure 1: Protection glasses.



Can you participate in sports with one good eye?

While the risk of eye injuries varies with the type of sports, protective eyeglasses should always be used for sports, if there is a possibility of eye injury. But for some sports like football it is pretty well impossible to wear eye protection. As a general rule the biggest risk to the eye is an object or projectile small enough to hit the eye, in other words smaller than the eye socket, the protective cup of bone around the eye. Nasty eye injuries have occurred in all sports, but at the end of the day the individual and the parents and sporting organisations have to make an assessment of the risk to benefit ratio of playing certain sports. Young and active people are at a higher risk for eye accidents and sports injuries. But we all love sport and we can't live our lives surrounded in cotton wool. Participating in sports requires full understanding of the risks involved. For younger children the parents must participate in making decisions. There are some sports that should be avoided if eye injury to the only remaining eye is of concern, as they are high risk.

Behaviour at work and recreation

To reduce the risk of work related injuries, eyeglasses should be worn. In some work areas industrial safety glasses, side shields, or full face shields may be necessary. Certain industrial and hobby activities (e.g. fireworks) should be avoided as they present such a high risk. When driving a car, seat belts should always be worn.

Maintaining a healthy eye

Even though the good eye provides all of a person's vision, it does not work harder or wear out. Nevertheless, regular medical eye examinations are necessary to help ensure a full productive life and your ophthalmologist should be consulted at any time new symptoms or problems develop.

Why should you have regular eye examinations?

Regular medical eye examinations are very important for everyone, as eye disease can occur at any age. Often the patient does not realize symptoms unless the disease has done damage. Therefore, if diagnosed and treated by an ophthalmologist early, most blindness is preventable.

An ophthalmologist is the doctor who provides eye care: medical, surgical and optical. But the ophthalmologist works with your general practitioner, optometrist and orthoptist, as part of a team. It's your sight – your eyes deserve the best care available!