

Ten tips to protect your eyes



Eye safety is so important when doing any activity that involves chemicals or materials that can break and fly in to your eye. Using the appropriate eye protection should be as automatic as putting on a seat belt when you get into a car. Putting on safety goggles should be the first thing you do when undertaking anything that could cause an eye injury. Here are some tips for protecting your eyes in the workplace and at home.

1. Think before you start

When doing any DIY, cleaning work, using chemicals or power tools it is important to do an assessment of what could potentially cause an eye injury. Be sure to check your surroundings and use proper eye protection before you start any activity.

2. Check your surroundings

It is important to know who and what is nearby when doing any activity that involves chemicals or materials that can break and fly into your eye. Make sure there are no trips, hazards, distractions or children in the area.

3. Cut down the risk

Reduce the risk of an eye injury by controlling potential hazards. Suggestions include:

- Don't use equipment you are not familiar with.
- Replace high-risk equipment and toxic chemicals with safer alternatives wherever possible.

4. Wear appropriate protection

In most cases, ordinary eye wear such as prescription glasses, sunglasses and contact lenses **do not** offer adequate protection against injury. Ensure you use eye protection that complies with the Australian Standard. Safety goggles offer an extra level of protection above safety glasses. Safety goggles must:

- Be close-fitting around your eyes and side of your head.
- Fit comfortably so that you can leave them on for long periods.

5. Children

Monitor children don't:

- Throw sand, dirt or small things at others.
- Run with pencils, pens or other pointy objects.
- Use sprays incorrectly.



6. Do It Yourself (DIY)

Many eye injuries occur in the workplace and at home due to inappropriate eye protection. Think about your eyes and use the appropriate eye protection (made to Australian Standard) when:

- Hammering
- Using power tools
- Fencing or using wire
- Using nail guns
- Welding

7. Gardening

When gardening, don't think your sunglasses will protect your eyes — be sure to use the correct eye protection when:

- Lawn mowing
- Pruning (as well as needing protection from clippings, some plants have sap that contains chemicals which are dangerous to the eye).
- Using a whipper snipper

8. Chemicals

Be careful with all chemicals as many of them are dangerous to the eye, including common household products such as:

- Oven cleaner
- Pool cleaner
- Polish
- Cleaning products
- Bleach

9. First aid

- Always have adequate first aid equipment available.
- **Chemicals** – Hold your face under running water for up to 20 minutes and allow the water stream to flood into your eyes.
- **Cuts, punctures or foreign objects** – Do not wash or rub the eye or try to remove objects.

10. Seek medical help immediately

See your local GP or, if serious, come into our Emergency Department.

Disclaimer This document describes the generally accepted practice at the time of publication only. It is only a summary of clinical knowledge regarding this area. The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital makes no warranty, express or implied, that the information contained in this document is comprehensive. They accept no responsibility for any consequence arising from inappropriate application of this information.
Ten tips for safer health care #25 | Content owner: Emergency Department|
Last published: 14/02/16 | Next review: 14/02/17

