

March is

Workplace Eye Wellness Month



According to Prevent Blindness America, eye injuries in the workplace are very common. More than 2,000 people injure their eyes at work each day. About 1 in 10 injuries require one or more missed workdays to recover from. Of the total amount of work-related injuries, 10–20 % will cause temporary or permanent vision loss.

Experts believe that the right eye protection could have lessened the severity or even prevented 90% of eye injuries in accidents.

Common causes for eye injuries:

- Flying objects (bits of metal, glass)
- Tools
- Particles
- Chemicals
- Harmful radiation
- Other hazards

What is my best defense against an eye injury?

- Know the eye safety dangers at work—complete an eye hazard assessment
- Eliminate hazards before starting work by using machine guarding, work screens or other engineering controls
- Use proper eye protection.

When should I protect my eyes at work?

You should wear safety eyewear whenever there is a chance of eye injury. Anyone working in or passing through areas that pose eye hazards should wear protective eyewear.

What type of safety eyewear is available?

- Non-prescription and prescription safety glasses
- Goggles
- Face shields

- Welding helmets
- Full-face respirators

What type of safety eye protection should I wear?

The type of safety eye protection you should wear depends on the hazards in your workplace. If you are working in an area that has particles, flying objects or dust, you must at least wear safety glasses with side protection (side shields). If you are working with chemicals, you should wear goggles. If you are working near hazardous radiation (welding, lasers or fiber optics) you must use special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shields or helmets designed for that task.

What is the difference between glass, plastic and polycarbonate safety lenses?

All three types meet or exceed the requirements for protecting your eyes.

Glass lenses

- Are not easily scratched
- Can be used around harsh chemicals
- Can be made in your corrective prescription
- Are sometimes heavy/uncomfortable

Plastic lenses

- Are lighter weight
- Protect against welding splatter
- Are not likely to fog
- Are not as scratch-resistant as glass

Polycarbonate lenses

- Are lightweight
- Protect against welding splatter
- Are not likely to fog
- Are stronger and more impact resistant than glass or plastic
- Are not as scratch-resistant as glass ■



10 Ways to Prevent Eye Injuries at Work

- Nearly one million Americans have lost some degree of their sight due to an eye injury. More than 700,000 Americans injure their eyes at work each year. Luckily, 90% of all workplace eye injuries can be avoided by using proper safety eyewear. Here are 10 ways that you can help prevent an eye injury in your workplace.

- **Assess.** Look carefully at plant/factory/etc. operations. Inspect all work areas, access routes and equipment for hazards. Study eye accident and injury reports. Identify operations and areas that present eye hazards.

- **Test.** Uncorrected vision problems can cause accidents. Provide vision testing during routine employee physical exams.

- **Protect.** Select protective eyewear that is designed for the specific duty or hazard. Protective eyewear must meet the current standards from the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and later revisions.



- **Participate.** Create a 100% mandatory program for eye protection in all operation areas of the plant/factory/etc. A broad program prevents more injuries and is easier to enforce than one that limits eye protection to certain departments, areas or jobs.

- **Fit.** Employees need protective eyewear that fits well and is comfortable. Have eyewear fitted by an eye care professional or someone trained to do this. Provide repairs for eyewear and require each employee to be in charge of his or her own gear.

- **Plan for an Emergency.** Set up first-aid procedures for eye injuries. Have eyewash stations that are easy to get to, especially where chemicals are used. Train employees in basic first-aid; identify those with more advanced training.

- **Educate.** Conduct ongoing educational programs to create, keep up and highlight the need for protective eyewear. Add eye safety to new employee orientations.

- **Support.** Management support is key to having a successful eye safety program. Management can show support by wearing protective eyewear whenever needed.

- **Review.** Regularly review and update company accident prevention policies. The goal should be NO eye injuries or accidents!

- **Put it in Writing.** Once your safety program is created, put it in writing. Display a copy of the policy in work and employee gathering areas. Include a review of the policy in new employee orientations. ■



Spring Outdoor Safety

The return of warmer temperatures brings the opportunity for freedom, relaxation, exploration, and being closer to nature. Whether you're relaxing in the backyard, turning up your garden, hitting the pool, or exploring the great outdoors, here are some ways to help keep you and your family healthy this spring and summer.

Beware of Bugs

Warmer temperatures aren't just attractive to people—mosquitoes, ticks and fleas love them too. Mosquitoes can transmit West Nile virus, St. Louis encephalitis virus, eastern equine encephalitis virus and even dengue; ticks can transmit Lyme disease and other serious infections; fleas can transmit plague.

To prevent these illnesses, use an appropriate insect and tick repellent containing 20% DEET, and apply it properly. Prime mosquito-biting hours are usually from dusk to dawn, but ticks are out at all times. Young ticks are so small that they can be difficult to see. The CDC recommends repelling mosquitoes with DEET, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus.

Once indoors, family members should shower as soon as possible and get checked for ticks. Wash and tumble dry clothing, and check pets for ticks. Remove ticks with fine-tipped tweezers. Consult your healthcare provider if a rash, fever, body aches, fatigue, headache, stiff neck and/or disorientation develops in the 1–3 weeks following a bite. It could be any number of illnesses.

Healthy Pets, Healthy People

Remember to protect your pets during the warm weather. Children can get roundworm and hookworm from soil contaminated by pet feces (stool), so make sure that puppies and kittens are seen by a veterinarian and dewormed. Protect pets from ticks and fleas by keeping them on a flea and tick control program. Talk to your veterinarian for advice

on appropriate products to use on your pet. Cover sandboxes when not in use to make sure that animals do not contaminate them with parasites that can cause diseases like toxocarasis and toxoplasmosis.

Around the Yard

Seal up and clean up to prevent rodent infestation. Fill gaps or holes in and outside your home. Replace or repair torn window screens to keep bugs out of the house. Seal rodent food sources such as pet food, bird feeders and garbage cans and trim grass and shrubbery within 100 feet of your home. Remove items that may collect standing water such as buckets, old tires and toys. Mosquitoes can breed in them in just days.

Gardening is great for all ages. Stay safe by wearing gloves, using safety gear when handling equipment and chemicals, protecting yourself from the sun and using insect repellent. Also watch out for extreme heat and know your limitations.

Pollens and air pollutants can trigger allergic reactions and asthma. Some experiences include nasal and sinus allergies and hives. Asthma can cause recurrent symptoms such as wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath and coughing. Stay healthy by properly taking any prescription or over-the-counter allergy medicine and having and following an asthma action plan. Wearing a protective nose and mouth mask, or even sunglasses/protective eyewear while doing yard work could help to avoid the allergy and asthma triggers. ■



Kale Frittata with Tomato & Basil

Kale is plentiful during the month of March—and a perfect way to enjoy it is in a frittata (Italy's version of an omelet)! A frittata, made with eggs and finished off under a broiler, is a great way to eat seasonal vegetables for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Kale is also a rich source of beta carotene, vitamin K, vitamin C and calcium.

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 cup chopped kale
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- 9 large eggs
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan or Romano cheese, divided
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ½ cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil or 1/2 tsp. dried basil—or to taste

In a 9- or 10-inch iron nonstick, ovenproof skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. *NOTE: If using a regular or cast iron skillet, coat the sides of the pan with oil.* Sauté the kale and onion until wilted, about 3 minutes. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, half the cheese, salt and pepper.

Stir kale and onion into egg mixture and then return egg mixture to skillet. Sprinkle in tomatoes, basil and the remaining cheese. Turn the heat down to medium to medium-low and cook uncovered for 10–12 minutes or until the frittata is just about set. While cooking, pre-heat broiler.

Remove the skillet from the burner and place under the oven broiler until the frittata top turns a light golden brown—about 1 minute. Remove from the broiler and let the frittata rest a minute before cutting into wedges. Serve hot, cold or at room temperature. Makes 6 servings.

Per serving: 168 calories, 11g total fat (4g saturated fat), 4g carbohydrate, 12g protein, <1g dietary fiber, 289mg sodium ■