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August is Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

When it comes to thinking about children's health, eye injuries and vision impairments are probably not among the first ailments that come to mind.

Yet more than 12.1 million school-age children—nearly 25 percent—have vision impairments. Additionally, thousands of children age 5 and under suffer eye injuries each year at home, in the car and at play. Eye injuries affect older children as well, accounting for a majority of the 42,000 annual sports-related eye injuries.

Appropriate eye care is essential for maintaining good vision. Most eye problems in children can be corrected if they are detected and treated early. However, many problems can result in permanent vision loss if left untreated.

Your child's eyes should be examined during regular pediatric appointments, and vision testing should be conducted around age 3.

The most common types of eye problems seen in children are:

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

Some of the signs your child might be experiencing impaired vision:



- Wandering or crossed eyes
- Blurred or double vision
- Headaches or pain in the eyes
- Difficulty copying from board at school
- Holding books close to read or sitting close to the TV
- Squinting
- Sensitivity to light
- Burning, itching, watery eyes, or inexplicable redness in the eyes

To minimize the risk of eye injuries, young children should only have access to age-appropriate toys devoid of sharp or protruding parts or that can fire projectiles. Older children with glasses should wear polycarbonate lenses when playing sports.

Children should also have access to sunglasses and be taught the importance of limiting exposure to UV rays, as they are more susceptible to UV damage than adults.

Distracted Walking

Cellphone usage has long been considered hazardous while driving, with 47 states having at least some restrictions limiting cell phone operation while behind the wheel. Now new research shows that mobile devices can also lead to injuries for distracted pedestrians as well.

The report is titled "Pedestrian injuries due to mobile phone use in public places." After mining data from the National Electronic Surveillance System, researchers estimated that the number of pedestrians who are treated in an emergency room every year for injuries suffered while using cellphones has more than doubled since 2004.

In 2010, the most recent year surveyed, over 1,506 people were admitted for injuries suffered from inattentive walking.

The study's lead author called for more awareness when traveling by foot. Additionally, the CDC recommends crossing streets only in designated crosswalks, observing drivers who appear to be turning, and increasing visibility with reflective clothing and a flashlight when walking at night.

DID YOU KNOW

According to a 2012 study, nearly one in three pedestrians is distracted by a mobile device while crossing busy intersections.



Summer Dieting Tips

While we often think of winter as the season most likely to wreak havoc on our waistlines, all that barbeque, potato salad, beer and ice cream can pack quite the caloric punch when the sun is hot and the days are long. To keep your diet in check and avoid overdoing it this summer, follow these simple tips:

1. **Substitute, substitute, substitute.** Swap grilled fish and veggie kabobs in place of steak and pork. Substitute frozen yogurt or popsicles for ice cream.
2. **Drink lots of water.** Not only is it important to stay hydrated during the hottest time of the year, water also fills you up between meals, resulting in fewer calories consumed.
3. **Turn down the air conditioning.** Studies show that when your body is exposed to heat and humidity, your appetite decreases and you eat less.

4. **Exercise.** Take advantage of the warm weather by going for a jog or swim, or playing an outdoor sport. Just be careful to exercise during the cooler part of the day and drink plenty of water.



Surviving a Heat Wave

An area is said to be experiencing a heat wave when temperatures are above normal for the region for at least four days in a row. With much of the country approaching near-record high temperatures this summer, it's important to know what steps to take when heat becomes deadly.

1. Remain in air-conditioned buildings. Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device.
2. Limit outdoor activity, especially during midday when it is hottest, and avoid direct sunlight. When outside, wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
3. Take cool showers or baths to lower your body temperature.
4. Drink more water than usual and don't wait until you are thirsty. Drink two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.
5. Avoid alcohol, caffeine and liquids containing a high amount of sugar, which can dehydrate you.
6. Monitor local weather reports for extreme heat warnings.
7. Never leave people or pets in a closed, parked vehicle.
8. Learn the symptoms of heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke, and how to respond.

20-Minute Chicken Creole

This Southern dish is quick to make, and contains no added fat and very little added salt in its spicy tomato sauce.

- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 chicken breasts (whole, skinless, boneless)
- 1 14.5 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup low sodium chili sauce
- 1 large green pepper (chopped)
- 2 celery stalks (chopped)
- 1 small onion (chopped)
- 2 garlic cloves (minced)
- 1 tsp. dried basil
- 1 tsp. dried parsley
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- ¼ tsp. salt

Heat pan over medium-high heat. Add vegetable oil and chicken and cook three to five minutes until no longer pink when cut. Reduce heat to medium. Add tomatoes with juice, chili sauce, green pepper, celery, onion, garlic, basil, parsley, cayenne pepper and salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and cover the pan. Let simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Serve over cooked rice or whole grain pasta.

Yield: 8 servings. Each serving provides 130 calories, 3g of fat, 20mg of cholesterol, 230mg of sodium and 2g of fiber.

Source: Oregon State University Cooperative Extension Service

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Children's Health: Vision Care

Properly developed vision is vital to a child's growth and development. Use the following guidelines to help understand and care for your children's eyes.

Infant Vision

- During the first four months of life, infants will follow moving objects with their eyes and attempt to reach for things.
- Between four and eight months, a baby should begin to turn from side to side, as well as use his or her arms and legs. At this time, eye movements and eye-body coordination skills begin to develop, and both eyes should focus more.
- At 8 to 12 months old, a baby should begin to use both eyes together and be able to judge distances.

A baby's eyes should be checked at birth and during well-baby doctor visits throughout his or her first year. All children should also undergo a complete eye exam at around 6 months old.

Preschool-Age Vision

Between ages 3 and 6, children continue the process of fine-tuning their vision skills. Preschool children develop visually-guided eye, hand and body coordination; general motor skills; and the necessary visual motor skills to learn how to read and write. If no previous vision problem has been detected, your child should have a thorough eye exam by age 3 to ensure vision is

developing properly and to detect any developing eye diseases. If the child remains healthy, his or her next eye exam should be at age 5.

School-Age Vision

Astigmatism, nearsightedness and farsightedness are the main vision concerns for school-age children. To detect and treat these problems, they should have their eyes checked around age 6 and every two years thereafter if no vision problems exist.

However, if a child requires glasses or contact lenses for refractive errors, he or she should receive a vision exam every year. The basic vision skills a child needs by school age include:

- Near and distance vision
- Eye movement skills
- Focusing skills
- Peripheral vision
- Hand-eye coordination

Parents should bring children in for a complete eye exam and should not rely solely on vision screenings done by a school nurse or pediatrician

Spotting Eye Problems

Signs that a child may have vision problems include:

- Constant eye rubbing
 - Extreme light sensitivity
 - Poor focusing
 - Poor visual tracking (following an object)
 - Abnormal eye alignment or movement after 6 months of age
 - Chronic eye redness or tearing
 - A white pupil instead of black
- In school-age children, watch for other signs such as:
- Inability to see objects at a distance
 - Inability to read the blackboard
 - Squinting
 - Difficulty reading
 - Sitting too close to the TV

Source: www.kidshealth.org



Did You Know...?

For children who are rough on their glasses, polycarbonate lenses and twist frames might be the answer. Polycarbonate lenses are plastic—not glass—so they won't shatter on impact. Twist frames are flexible and won't be broken or bent out of shape easily.