

## **PRESS RELEASE**

TO: Editor in Charge

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Parents Urged to Prevent Eye Injuries for Keikis**

*(Honolulu, Hawaii)*, September 24, 2008 – Eye injuries occur to children 5 and under every year due to accidents at play or in the home causing serious damage and even blindness. These injuries are avoidable with a few simple steps. This September is Children Eye Health and Safety month and The American Academy of Ophthalmology is urging parents to take the necessary precautions to prevent these eyes injuries from happening.

“Sports are a leading cause for children’s eye injuries,” said Dr. Christopher Tortora, M.D., Medical Director at Wahiawa’s Hawaiian Eye Center. “Parents must make sure that their children are equipped with proper safety glasses, goggles, or face shields before participating in sports.”

Though children may object to using safety glasses because they are uncommon among professional athletes, it’s important for parents to realize that regular glasses are not an appropriate form of protective eyewear due to the possibility that they may shatter, causing a worse injury. Although appropriate eye wear may be overlooked in professional sports, there are athletes that have excelled and exercised eye safety. A prime example is one of NBA’s all time greatest stars, Kareem Abdul Jabbar.

It’s also important to understand what type of protection is suitable for the sport. A polycarbonate face mask or wire shield should be used for fencing, some positions in baseball, hockey, and lacrosse. Other sports such as basketball, soccer, hockey, tennis, and paintball require the use of sports goggles with polycarbonate lenses and, sometimes, face shields.

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Parents should also consider certain safety measures to protect children from eye injuries at home. Sharp objects and harmful household detergents must be kept out of children's hands. They should be stored in cabinets and drawers that are either locked or out of the reach of children. Also, safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs can prevent falls that can also cause severe eye injuries.

“Early detection and treatment is vital when an eye injury occurs,” said Dr. Tortora. “By noticing evidence of injury and taking a look at the eye, parents can properly seek medical attention for their child.”

Eye injuries are likely to be severe if there is a tear or cut in the eyelid, the eye looks red or swollen, vision is decreased, or the appearance of the eye is abnormal. If a serious injury is suspected, protect the eye with a paper cup taped over the eye socket to prevent pressure on the eye, and seek medical attention promptly. Do not try to remove objects from the eye which are not easily removed, and do not put pressure on the eye or lids.

Eye injuries are preventable for children. When parents follow these recommendations during play or at home, children are more likely to maintain healthy vision well in to the future.

Dr. Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of The Hawaiian Eye Show, a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision. He and his colleagues at Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to education the public about the importance of preventative eye care. To learn more about other health issues, please call Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8448 where “*life has never looked better.*”

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