



PRESS RELEASE

TO: Editor in Charge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATHLETES: WEAR THE EYE GEAR

Prevent Eye Injuries by Wearing the Appropriate Sport Protective Eyewear

(Honolulu, Hawaii), March 30, 2011 – In the United States, thousands of sports related eye injuries occur every year. It is essential for athletes, novice or professional, to understand the dangers of sports related eye injuries. To better educate people about these dangers and to urge athletes to wear appropriate protective eyewear, the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) has designated April as Sports Eye Safety Month.

“Sports related eye injuries can range from abrasions of the cornea and bruises of the lids to internal eye injuries such as retinal detachments and internal bleeding,” shares Christopher Tortora, M.D., Medical Director of the Hawaiian Eye Center in Wahiawa. “In some cases, these injuries can lead to permanent vision loss.”

According to the AAO, 90 percent of sports eye related injuries can be prevented with protective eye wear. The most common eye injuries that result from not wearing protective eye wear are blunt trauma and impact eye injuries. They occur when someone is hit in the eye with force. Contact sports that use balls, rackets or sticks have a higher risk for blunt trauma injuries. Injuries will vary from a minor injury such as a black eye, to something much more serious, such as fractures of the facial bones, or a ruptured eyeball.

Penetrating or piercing injuries can occur when something cuts or pierces the eye. These injuries are less common, however can be serious. There are many different items that can cause this type of injury such as broken glass, debris, and fingernails.

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Many sports that occur in water or snow can cause radiation injuries. For these types of activities, people need to pay attention to the effects of the sun reflecting off of the water or snow. Spending time in these environments without eye protection can lead to injury causing painful irritation of the eye. In addition, the ultraviolet light from the sun has been linked to various eye problems, including cataracts and macular degeneration with long-term exposure.

The best eye protection while participating in sports is a 3-mm polycarbonate lenses. Polycarbonate lenses are high impact-resistant and are also thin and light weight. Polycarbonate is also the most shatter-resistant lens material, and it filters 100 percent of ultraviolet (UV) light.

“It is also important to understand that each sport requires a different type of protective eyewear,” said Christopher Tortora, M.D. “Be sure to consult with an eye care professional about eyewear appropriate for your sport.”

Athletes always risk sustaining injuries while playing sports, however, by wearing the appropriate protective eyewear, the occurrence of eye injuries is greatly reduced.

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 educating the public about the importance of preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call the Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8488 where *“life has never looked better.”*

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