

PRESS RELEASE



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Photo Attached



April is Sports Eye Safety Month

(Honolulu, Hawaii) April 16, 2015 – Each year, more than 25,000 people seek treatment for sports-related eye injuries, according to Prevent Blindness America. This figure is only a fraction of overall incidents that are reported. April is designated Sports Eye Safety Month to help raise awareness of the importance of wearing appropriate sports eye guards, which can significantly reduce the risk of serious injuries that can damage vision or even cause blindness.

“Eye injuries occur most often in water/pool sports, basketball and baseball/softball, ranging from abrasion of the cornea and bruising of the eyelid to retinal detachment and internal bleeding,” said Christopher Tortora, M.D., Medical Director of Hawaiian Eye Center. “According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, over 90 percent of these injuries are preventable.”

Blunt trauma is the most common sports-related eye injury, occurring when the eye is hit with force. Not surprisingly, contact sports that use balls, rackets or sticks have a higher rate of these types of injuries. Contact sports also have a higher rate of penetrating eye injuries that result when the eye is pierced by an object such as debris from equipment or the environment.

With water/pool sports, radiation eye injuries are often overlooked. Water, snow and ice create a reflective surface for ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun and can cause photokeratitis, or UV keratitis, which is when the cornea is sunburned and becomes inflamed. Extended exposure to UV light can lead to serious eye diseases, including cataracts and macular degeneration—when the central part of the retina, known as the macula, starts to deteriorate.

Athletes should wear the appropriate protective eyewear, which varies, for the sport they are actively participating in at all times. Polycarbonate sports eye guards for popular sports such as baseball, basketball, soccer, football and hockey are highly recommended by experts—in addition to helmets and faceguards for select activities. Polycarbonate swimming goggles are recommended for athletes of water/pool sports. Those who wear glasses or contacts should speak with their doctor about prescription sports eye guards.

Christopher Tortora, M.D., and Steven Rhee, D.O., are board-certified ophthalmologists at Hawaiian Eye Center. Dr. Tortora also hosts “The Hawaiian Eye Show,” a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision broadcast live every Saturday at 8 a.m. on KHVH 830 AM/rebroadcast at 9 p.m. on KHBZ 990 AM. Hawaiian Eye Center’s dedicated doctors and support staff 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 621-8448 or visit HawaiianEye.com and [Facebook.com/HawaiianEyeCenter](https://www.facebook.com/HawaiianEyeCenter), where “life has never looked better.”

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