

EYE-Q

by R. Thomas Barowsky, MD

Summer Safety Is Part of Summer Fun

We are continuing our theme of eye safety and protection to recognize April as National Home Eye Health Month. By emphasizing the simple things we can do to reduce the risk of eye injury that exists in our everyday lives, your family will be more able to enjoy the fun filled days of summer and there is less chance that we will see each other in the local emergency room.

Since the kids will soon be out of school for the season let's look at how these charming little devils can stay safe and still have fun. Some of the more common problems I see are from toys with spring loaded parts and rods that project from the toy. The toy might be labeled as safe for younger age groups but no toy is properly tested for its safety when activated near or towards the eye. Getting poked in the eye may look harmless when Moe, Larry and Curly get going but it is a painful experience for the real victim.

A lot of chemicals that we take for granted can also cause discomfort and concern. Most commonly are the pool chemicals that keep the water crystal clear and inviting. When you are in and out of the pool all day your eyes tend to get very bloodshot from contact with the treated water. Keep a bottle of good quality eye moisturizing drops or eyewash handy to wash these nasty chemicals out of the eyes. Avoid any of the drops that advertise their ability to "get the red out" as they contain additional ingredients that may actually make the eyes worse. Most important of all, do not make your own eyewash out of boiled tap water and salt. There can be organisms even in city water that are not adequately destroyed by heat which can cause serious sight threatening injury to the user.

Aerosol cans filled with all kinds of eye irritants also need to be carefully monitored. From Silly String" to mosquito spray and sun blocker all of these products can be terribly irritating to the unsuspecting eye.

Here are a few more tips to consider for a safe and fun filled summer:

1. BB guns, air rifles and pellet guns are not toys and should be treated as the weapons they really are
2. Proper firearm handling instruction by a responsible adult or parent even with a BB gun, air rifle or pellet gun is vitally important
3. Always wear safety glasses when shooting BB guns, air rifles and pellet guns
4. Never point something with any kind of projectile at anyone for any reason even if it has a soft sponge tip. Scratches on the eye are very painful and can cause additional problems later on
5. Watch where you point that spray bottle of perfume. You might think its funny to have your brother or boyfriend smell like one of your girlfriends but he may not and end up with an eyeful of your favorite scent. That goes for you guys too. Not everyone wants to smell like your body spray.

While you enjoy yourself this summer just keep in mind these few tips for protecting your family's vision and before you know it you're little darlings will be back in school and you'll wonder where did the summer go and now what do I do with my free time?

If you have questions about your eye health e-mail Dr. Barowsky at doctom@tdkj.com and we'll try to answer your questions here at Eye-Q.