

## Keep your Eye safely on the ball- Sports eye injury



From Ang Mo Kio Sports stadium to Geylang sports fields, athletes are competing against each other, building physical fitness, entertaining millions and teaching the value of hard work and teamwork.

Especially with Singapore hosting the first Youth Olympics Games (YOG) in August 2010, the emphasis on sports has been tantamount and this sports fever is rising in Singapore.

Each year, an errant finger, an accidental fall or heavy push or a misjudged catch can ruin their game; this number of sports related eye injury in Singapore is definitely on the rise. Approximately one-third of eye-injury victims are children.

April is Sports Eye Safety Month and many athletics are reminding the public that the only way to prevent a sports-related eye injury is for athletes to wear appropriate, sport-specific protective eye properly fitted by an eye care professional. Lenses made from polycarbonate materials provide the highest level of impact protection; they can withstand the impact of a ball or other projectile traveling at 90 miles per hour. Swimming goggles and helmets are available for sports like water polo, wind surfing and

"Athletes need to use protective eyewear because eye injuries can be devastating," said Dr Christopher Khng, Medical Director, of

Eyewise Vision Clinic. "Eye injuries are one of the leading causes of visual impairment in children. The injuries range from abrasions of the cornea and bruises of the lids to internal eye injuries, such as retinal detachments and internal bleeding. Unfortunately, some of these young athletes end up with permanent vision loss and blindness."

Many sports create risk for eye injuries; however protection is available for many activities, including basketball, baseball, hockey, football, golf, fencing and water polo, as well as racquetball and soccer. "The solution is simple, wear eye protection anytime you are playing sports, especially those that involve small balls at high velocity," said Dr. Christopher Khng.

Most sporting leagues don't require children to wear eye protection, so parents must insist that their children wear eye protection when they play. "Parents also can set a good example and by being more aware of such eye protection when playing sports," said Dr. Khng.

### High Risk Sports

Boxing and full body martial arts pose an extremely high risk of serious even blinding eye injuries. The face mask and helmets can help in hockey or baseball or a lightweight plastic face mask or wire shield.

Even a seemingly light blow can cause a serious eye injury. If a black eye, pain or visual problem occurs after a blow. Seek emergency medical help immediately. Eye diseases and injuries, and perform eye surgery. Be aware of pain, floaters or flashes when after a sports accident. The good news that 90 percent of serious eye injuries are preventable through appropriate protective eyewear and remember regular eye glasses do not offer adequate eye protection you need the appropriate sports graded protective eye wear.

**Go to** the emergency room immediately, even if the eye injury appears minor. Delaying medical attention can result in permanent vision loss or blindness. Take care of your eyes and vision so that you can keep your eyes focus on the ball and into the game.

For all sports eye injury concerns call Eyewise vision clinic at 6476 1211 today!



