



Disclaimer: This fact sheet is for educational purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is correct for you or your child.

D: Eye injury—First Aid

! For serious eye injuries call 000 or go to the nearest hospital with an emergency department. !

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Fact 1: Children do not always disclose that they have suffered an eye injury. Possible indicators of eye injury include:
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- pain in or around the eye
- excessive tearing (watering)
- covering one or both eyes
- distress
- problems moving the eye
- one eye looks different to the other
- sudden problems with vision
- cut or torn skin around the eye or eyelid
- visible blood in any part of the eye
- bruising on or around the eye
- intermittent shutting of one eye
- sensitivity to glare.

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Fact 2: Basic first aid for injury to the cornea (clear structure at the front of the eye)

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Corneal abrasion

- A graze to the cornea or clear front part of the eye is a common injury. It is often a result of a scratch from a fingernail, plant or toy. A superficial corneal abrasion will most often heal very quickly on its own.
- If the child is sensitive to light, or experiences redness or blurred vision, they should see a doctor.
- Scratches from plants and fingernails pose the risk of infection and need to be checked by a doctor.

Foreign body on the cornea

A foreign body on the eye might be a very small metal or wood particle, dust, glass, plant matter or insect.

- DO NOT let the child rub the eye.
- Lie the child down on their back and keep the child calm.
- Encourage tears to try to flush the foreign body out of the eye.
- To obtain a view of the foreign body get the child to open the eyelid and move the eye in different directions.
- If you see a foreign body on the white part of the eye you might be able to remove it by gently wiping with a damp clean cloth, tissue or a cotton tip applicator.
- Try opening the eyelid and flushing the eye with water from a cup, jug, slowly running tap or eyebath.
- If the foreign body does not dislodge, see a doctor immediately.

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Fact 3: First aid for a cut or tear to the eyelid

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- DO NOT wash the eye area with water or other liquid.
- Lie the child down on their back and keep the child calm.
- A sterile dressing with no pressure may need to be applied to help control bleeding.
- See a doctor immediately.

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Fact 4: First aid for poison, chemical splash or spray injury to the eye

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- Lie the child down on their back and keep the child calm.
- Flood the eye with water from a cup, jug or slowly running tap.
- It is important to continue doing this for at least 20 minutes, holding the eyelid open, to help neutralise the substance in the eye.
- Call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 for additional support.
- Locate the bottle or container that contained the substance.
- Visit a doctor or hospital immediately, taking the bottle or container with you for identification.

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Fact 5: First aid when the eye is hit with force (known as blunt trauma)

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- Lie the child down on their back and keep the child calm.
- Carefully apply a cold compress.
- See a doctor.

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Fact 6: First aid when it is suspected an object has penetrated the eye

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- NEVER attempt to remove an object that has penetrated or is embedded in the eye.
- Lie the child down on their back and keep the child calm.
- Place pads around the eye. Place an object like a paper cup over the eye, resting on the pads. Loosely wrap a bandage over the pad and cup and around the child's head to keep the pad and cup in place. Do not apply any pressure to the bandage or cup.
- DO NOT give the child food or drink as they may require a general anaesthetic to assess and repair the injury.
- Visit a doctor or hospital immediately.

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The Statewide Ophthalmology Service (SOS), a network of the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI), a statutory health corporation, NSW HEALTH.