Protecting Your Eyes During Winter Activities

Seasonal changes bring new opportunities for sports and leisure. During the winter months, interest peaks in such activities as snowboarding, skiing and basketball. While you enjoy these seasonal pleasures, it is easy to forget about the risks involved in leaving your eyes unprotected.

Eye injuries often occur as a result of sports activity. Indoor winter sports such as basketball and hockey are notorious for putting unprotected eyes at high risk for injury. Uncontrollable balls and pucks, as well as the possibility of being poked by the limbs of other players, increase the likelihood that injury will occur.

Basketball players are often jabbed in the eye by an opponent’s fingers. In fact, basketball is the most common cause of eye injury in the 15- to 64-year-old age group, and accounts for nearly a third of all sports-related injuries, according to the New England Ophthalmological Society. For hockey players, it is more common to suffer injuries from pucks and sticks than from fingers or elbows.

In all of these cases, polycarbonate protective eyewear is the most effective form of protection. For this reason, Davis Vision proudly protects the eyes of children by including polycarbonate lenses for them in our comprehensive plans.

It is important to wear protective eyewear while engaging in any sport. In sports like hockey, eye trauma from a stick, puck or elbow to players wearing partial or no protection can cause hyphema, orbital fracture, retinal detachment or globe rupture. When players wear facemasks, however, the risk of eye injuries—including preorbital lacerations—is reduced, according to USAHockey.com. In fact, says the organization, blinding eye injury to a hockey player wearing full facial protection has never been reported.

Outdoor winter sports such as skiing and snowboarding can be as dangerous as basketball and hockey, but for different reasons. Improper use of eyewear can result in injuries just as detrimental as those resulting from being hit with a puck or an elbow. Goggles that are used during skiing and snowboarding are sometimes the culprits. If worn improperly, eyewear may become damaged during a fall and the lens could shatter, possibly harming the eye.

With this in mind, it is essential that proper protective eyewear be worn. For anyone engaged in winter sports, taking this precaution can prevent a devastating injury. Polycarbonate lenses are the most impact-resistant type of protective eyewear. Sports goggles with polycarbonate lenses (either with or without a prescription) will reduce the incidences of sports injuries.

During the winter months, eyes need to be protected from all kinds of damage. Injury may result not only from improperly worn eyewear, but also from the outdoor environment. That’s why it is also necessary to safeguard your eyes from the sun’s rays throughout the year. Exposure to UV rays can cause just as much damage during the winter as in summer, so it is wise to employ the same methods of UV protection all year long. Even greater UV exposure occurs at the top of a mountain because the air is thinner there. Ski goggles can aid in protection from these mountaintop UV rays.

Snow reflects up to 80% of UV rays, causing a glare that can induce snow blindness. Options for cutting this glare include polarized lenses and anti-reflective coating. By using the appropriate eyewear to protect against UV rays, accidents due to snow blindness can be significantly reduced.

For additional information, please contact your Davis Vision account executive.

Even in winter, exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays can be damaging, and snow reflects large amounts of UV rays...