According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, an estimated 90 percent of eye injuries are preventable with the use of proper safety eyewear. Even a minor injury to the cornea—like that from a small particle of dust or debris—can be painful and become a life-long issue, so take the extra precaution and always protect the eyes. If the eye is injured, seek emergency medical help immediately.

Effective Eyewear
The best ways to prevent injury to the eye is to always wear the appropriate eye protection. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that approximately three out of every five workers injured were either not wearing eye protection at the time of the accident or wearing the wrong kind of eye protection for the job. To be effective, eyewear must fit properly and be effectively designed to protect the eyes based on the activity being performed. The Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) has standards that require employers to provide their workers with the appropriate eye protection.

When to Wear Protective Eyewear
According to these standards, you (or anyone who is watching you work) should always wear properly fitted eye protective gear, such as safety glasses with side protection/shields, when:

- Doing work that may produce particles, slivers, or dust from materials like wood, metal, plastic, cement, and drywall
- Hammering, sanding, grinding, or doing masonry work
- Working with power tools
- Working with chemicals, including common household chemicals like ammonia, oven cleaners, and bleach
- Using a lawnmower, riding mower, or other motorized gardening devices like string trimmers (also called “weed wacker” or “weed whip”)
- Working with wet or powdered cement
- Welding (which requires extra protection like a welding mask or helmet from sparks and UV radiation)
- “Jumping” the battery of a motor vehicle
- Being a bystander to any of the above
Eye Safety Basics

Eye safety can be easily overlooked, sometimes to our own detriment and a lifetime of regret. Imagine that yesterday you could see perfectly well, but after an accident, today you're only partially sighted — to the extent that you can no longer drive or read. Your life has changed dramatically, never to be the same again. Now imagine that you could have prevented all of this simply by wearing safety glasses or observing other eye safety rules.

Common Causes of Eye Injuries

According to Prevent Blindness America (PBA), an estimated 2.4 million eye injuries occur in the United States each year, and nearly 1 million Americans have lost some degree of eyesight from an eye injury. Yet experts say wearing safety glasses and taking other common-sense precautions can prevent or reduce the severity of more than 90 percent of these eye injuries. PBA says the most common agents of eye injuries at work include:

- Flying objects (bits of metal, glass, plastic)
- Air-blown and wind-blown particles (dust, wood, sand)
- Tools (screwdrivers, wrenches)
- Chemicals (gasoline, oil, solvents, acids)
- Harmful radiation (welding arcs, UV)

At home, household cleaners and chemicals are common causes of eye injuries. Other causes include:

- Eyelash curlers
- Mascara brushes and other cosmetic applicators
- Fingernails (such as when applying and removing contact lenses)
- Lawn, garden and hand tools (mowers, etc.)
- Air-blown and wind-blown particles
- Bungee cords
- Falls, bumping into walls, etc.
- Champagne corks
- Battery acid
- Toys and games with hard or sharp edges

Blunt trauma (someone or something hitting your eye) causes many sports-related eye injuries. Besides another player's body, hand or finger, other causes of eye injuries during sports include:

- A ball or puck
- A stick, bat or racquet
- Wind-blown and airborne particles (sand, dirt)
- Ultraviolet radiation from sunlight
- Paintballs
- Fireworks

In most cases, simple precautions can help you prevent eye injuries at work, home and play. Avoid distractions when doing anything that could potentially harm your eyes. Resist the temptation to "multi-task" when working with tools or other objects near your eyes. And always wear safety glasses, protective goggles or other sports eyewear for greater eye safety when the situation calls for it.
Do’s and Don’ts of Emergency Eye Care

If an eye accident occurs, see a medical doctor or eye care professional as soon as possible since an injury may not be immediately obvious. Until a medical professional can be seen, heed the advice below.

Do:

- Protect the eye from further damage by holding a folded cloth over the eye, having it act as a shield.
- Seek eye care immediately.
- Bandage any cuts around the eye to prevent contamination or infection.
- Flush the eye with water in the case of a chemical burn or if there is small debris in the eye.
- Use a cold compress to treat a blunt trauma injury such as a black eye, but be careful not to apply additional pressure.

Don’t:

- Do not remove any objects that are stuck in the eye as this could worsen the injury.
- Do not wash out the eye when dealing with cuts or punctures to the eye.
- Do not attempt to self-medicate, apply ointments or take any medications, including over-the-counter drugs.
- Do not rub the eye or apply pressure. Doing so may cause more damage.

Prevention

The use of proper eye protection, such as safety glasses, goggles, face shields and helmets can prevent countless eye injuries. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires the use of eye and face protection whenever there is a chance of injury that could be prevented by such equipment. The right eye protection for each work situation depends upon the type of hazard, the circumstances of exposure, other protective equipment used and individual vision needs. Safety eyewear protection includes:

- Non-prescription (plano) and prescription (nonplano) safety glasses
- Goggles
- Face shields
- Welding helmets
- Full-face respirators

Types of Safety Lenses

Glass lenses
- Scratch Resistant
- Can be made with a corrective prescription
- If the lens is scratched, it should be replaced immediately.

Plastic lenses
- Are lightweight
- Protect against welding splatter
- Are not likely to fog

Polycarbonate lenses
- Are lightweight
- Protect against welding splatter
- Are not likely to fog
- Can be stronger, more impact-resistant and less

Follow these tips to protect your eyes from the sun:

- Select sunglasses that block UV rays. Don’t be deceived by color or cost. The ability to block UV light is not dependent on the price tag or how dark the sunglass lenses are.
- Make sure your sunglasses block 100 percent of UVA and UVB rays.
- Choose wraparound styles. Ideally, your sunglasses should wrap all the way around to your temples, so the sun’s rays can’t enter from the side.
- Wear a hat in addition to your sunglasses. Broad-brimmed styles provide the best protection for your eyes.
- Don’t rely on contact lenses. Even if your lenses have UV protection, remember to wear your sunglasses, too.
- Don’t be fooled by clouds: the sun’s rays can pass through haze and thin clouds. Sun damage to eyes can occur anytime during the year, not just in the summertime—so be sure to wear sunglasses whenever you’re outside.
- Never look directly at the sun. Looking directly at the sun at any time, including during an eclipse, can lead to solar retinopathy, which is damage to the eye’s retina from solar radiation.

Take special care at peak sun times: It’s best to avoid exposure between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when the sun’s UV rays are the strongest, but if you must be outdoors it’s especially important to shield your eyes with a hat and sunglasses.
Preventing Digital Eye Strain

Digital eye strain is easily preventable. The obvious answer is to limit digital media use, but for the vast majority of Americans who can’t - or won’t - there are multiple ways to lessen the impact of screen time. An important point is to pay attention to your body. Sudden eye, neck, head or shoulder pains are a warning sign of strain. If your eyes feel irritated, take a couple moments to look away from the screen, relax and make minor adjustments.

Adjust external factors:

- Reduce glare. Adjust the brightness of your screen by checking the control settings on your digital device. Consider changing your background color from bright white to a cooler gray. Glare reduction filters are also available and can easily attach to computer screens.
- Clean your screen. Frequently dust and wipe digital screens to help reduce glare.
- Dim your surrounding lighting. Lessen the amount of overhead and surrounding light that is competing with your device’s screen. Dim inside lights and try to avoid outside areas of intense brightness. This can help to reduce glare and strain.
- Keep your distance. Position your device so there is sufficient distance between your eyes and the screen. For computers, try sitting in your chair and extending your arm. Your palm should be able to rest comfortably on the monitor (as if you’re high-fiving the screen).
- For hand-held devices, try to keep the device a safe distance from your eyes and hold it just below eye level.
- Adjust your screen. Digital screens should always be directly in front of your face and slightly below eye level. Do not tilt a computer monitor.
- Increase text size. Bump up text size to help better define the content on your screen. Use the settings control to make adjustments that feel comfortable to your eyes.

Remember internal factors:

- Blink more often. Staring at a digital screen can affect the amount of times you blink, causing eyes to dry. Remind yourself to blink more often, which will also help to refocus your eyes.
- Take a 20-20-20 break. Even short breaks can make a huge difference. Every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break and look at something 20 feet away.

Symptoms of Digital Eye Strain

- Eye redness or irritation is usually the result of staring at the bright backlight of screens for a long period of time.
- Dry eyes can result from reduced blinking rates. Screens set at eye level can also cause dryness.
- Blurred vision is often due to screen glare. The chance of glare rises with bright overhead lights, older computer monitors, dirty screens, and outside sun.
- General fatigue can occur from staring at screens and straining to see small fonts and images.
- Back pain can occur because of poor body posture when a screen is not positioned properly.
- Neck pain is usually caused by poor screen and monitor positioning. Painful pressure can build on muscles if the neck is constantly moving up or down.
- Headaches can be caused by repeated eye strain.
Smoking Policy

The Clean Air Steering Committee started meeting in October 2011 for the purpose of reviewing our current smoking policy and making recommendations to the President’s Council regarding modifications. We have specifically been exploring the possibility of recommending that SUNY Oswego become a tobacco-free campus. While this would be good news for some, it would certainly be tough on those among our staff, faculty, students, and visitors who are smokers. The policy would prohibit tobacco use of any kind ANYWHERE on campus including grounds, parking lots, and vehicles—both state and personal.

Keeping hands clean through improved hand hygiene is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. If clean, running water is not accessible, as is common in many parts of the world, use soap and available water. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.

When should you wash your hands?

Before, during, and after preparing food
Before eating food
Before and after caring for someone who is sick
Before and after treating a cut or wound
After using the toilet
After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
After touching an animal or animal waste
After handling pet food or pet treats
After touching garbage

What is the right way to wash your hands?

Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub them well; be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
Rinse your hands well under running water.
Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

What if I don’t have soap and running water?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs.

Hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty.

How do you use hand sanitizers?

Apply the product to the palm of one hand.
Rub your hands together.
Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.
April Word Search

For a chance to win a great prize, complete the Word Search and send it via e-mail to lisa.drake@oswego.edu OR through Campus Mail: Lisa Drake, 110 Lee Hall. Make sure to put your name on it! The winner for March was Carol Carter. Congratulations Carol! Here’s what to search for: Workplace Eye Wellness Month, Ophthalmology, Protective Eyewear, Safety Glasses, Goggles, Precautions, Face Shields, Polycarbonate Lenses, Sunglasses, Digital Eye Strain, Prevention, Emergency Eye Care, Hand Hygiene.

In Memory of Jackson...an awesome dog!!!

Need Help to Quit Smoking?
Oswego Health offers two smoking cessation classes:
First Wednesday of Each Month at The Manor at Seneca Hill 6:30 to 9:30 PM
Second Monday of Each Month at Oswego Hospital 2-4 PM
Smoking Cessation Support Group second Monday of each month 6-7:30 PM at Oswego Hospital.

Ergonomic Assessments
FYI: Christine Body has been doing ergonomic assessments since 1996 and is available to do them here on campus. She can be reached at 312-2770 and would be happy to assist you with any questions or issues.