

🛡️ SAFETY FIRST 🛡️

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Something to think about 🤔

When you read the words ‘safety’ or ‘eye injury’, usually, the first thing that comes to mind is work related scenarios, where goggles or safety shields are required. What if I told you the majority of eye injuries take place at your home, during routine tasks, kids playing games.... Please read on!

I’m going to put my personal experiences to this and give you real life examples of unfortunate eye injuries I’ve encountered as an optometrist.

A young child, age 10, playing outside when the grass was being cut. Not too close to the area but close enough for a small stone to cause a blunt force impact to his eye and he sadly, lost his eye.

Another young child, given a Christmas gift of a projectile gun. No need to explain this one, but thankfully his eye was saved and healed well. Please be aware, these 'toys' could come in the form of foam discs or balls and even water guns!!

The following incident could happen to anyone. Have you ever driven past CEPEP workers maintaining the roadside and hear debris splatter on your car window? Imagine this debris splatter with the window down! This actually occurred, causing permanent damage to one eye.

My point is... 'Eye Injury Prevention' isn't only about wearing safety goggles or shields.

More Surprising Scenarios and Tips...

- ❖ Were you aware, eyes could get sunburn?? Yes, they can!! It's called photokeratitis. It occurs when the eye is exposed to too much UV light and becomes very irritated and inflamed. I've seen this happen after a CPL tournament, after several days of watching 'cricket in the sun', without sunglasses!
- ❖ Please use protective eyewear during certain sports like hockey or recreational activities like playing in the pool. Many parents do not understand the effects of chlorine on the eyes. Children tend to open their eyes under water. I've done it as a child. Please use appropriate swimming goggles.
- ❖ Do wear safety goggles during certain household tasks, such as power washing, cleaning out significant dust build up or spraying insecticides.
- ❖ Those laser pointers are cool!!! Not so much. Laser burns can cause temporary vision loss, at times permanent, if the injury is severe.
- ❖ Oh Fireworks!!! How pretty!! These eye injuries can be very severe due to the combination of force, heat and chemicals.

Did you know? 😬

The American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Society of Ocular Trauma found:

- ❖ The majority of people believe eye injuries are related to the workplace, like construction sites. However, many workplaces already have their safety eyewear policy, resulting in the majority of eye injuries actually occurring at home.
- ❖ More than 40% of eye injuries occur at home, involving home repairs, yard work, cleaning or cooking.
- ❖ More than 40% of annual eye injuries were sport or recreational related.
- ❖ Men are more likely to suffer from eye injuries than women.
- ❖ About 90% of these eye injuries could be avoided if appropriate protective eyewear was worn or certain preventive measures taken.
- ❖ Any abrasion to the eye, chemical splash or trauma is considered an emergency!! Go straight to A&E!!

Breaking News 🌟

On 12th June 2020, Australia updated their *mandatory safety standard* for projectile toys, designed to protect children from serious eye injuries or choking from toys like bow and arrow sets and toy guns. Sadly, in 2002, a six-year-old boy died after a rubber projectile from a toy gun lodged in his throat, blocking his airway.

Key safety changes included:

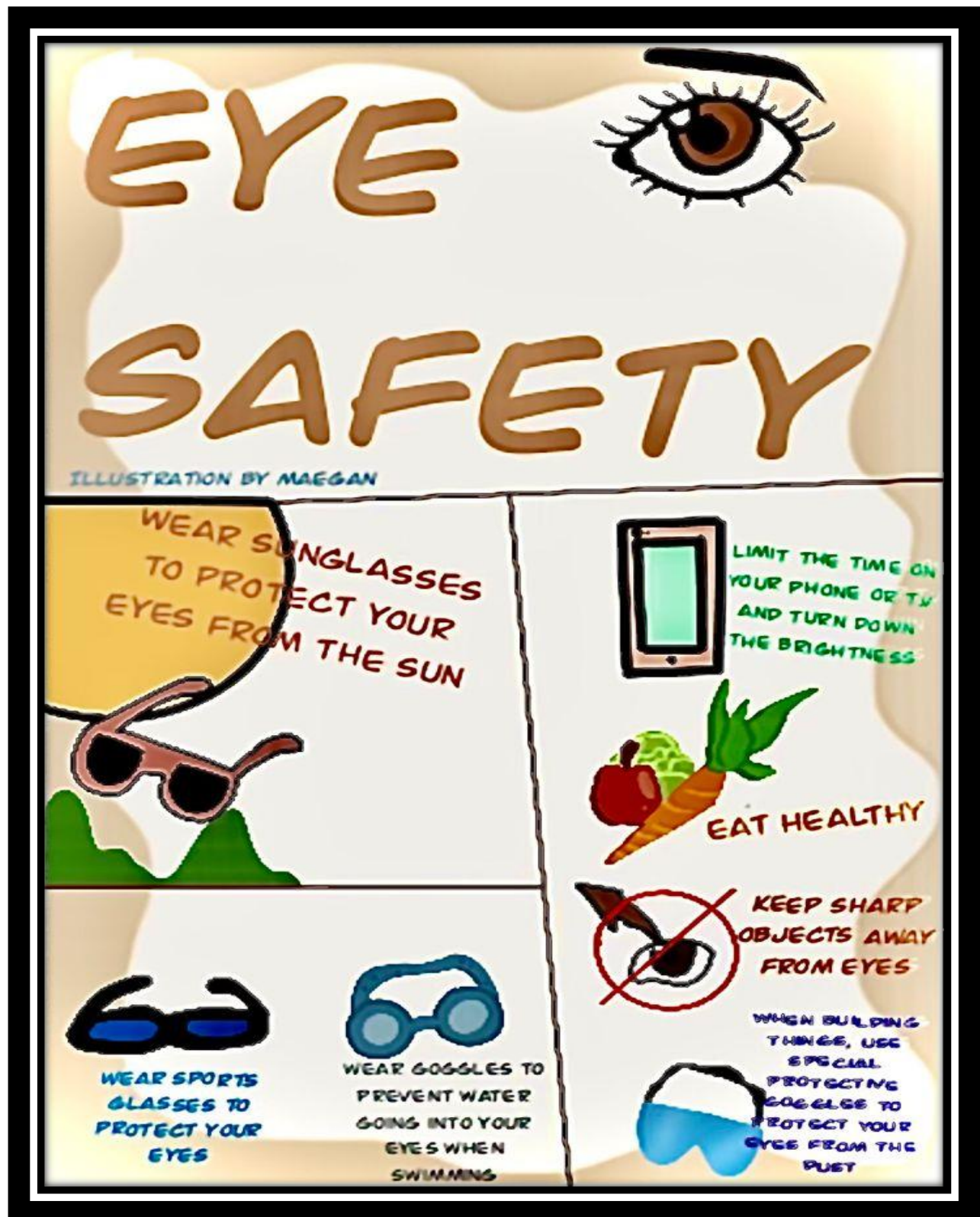
- Minimum size measurements of a projectile to avoid choking
- Clear warnings so that projectiles are not aimed at the eyes or face, and
- The toy's discharge mechanism must be designed so that it cannot launch an improvised projectile in a hazardous manner.

Hopefully, you read something new today and was able to think about eye safety a bit differently.

Please remember:

“Your eyes are priceless. Eye protection is easy”.

Art illustration entitled "Eye Safety" done by Maegan Elizabeth Banfield, in observance of Eye Injury Prevention month – October 2021.



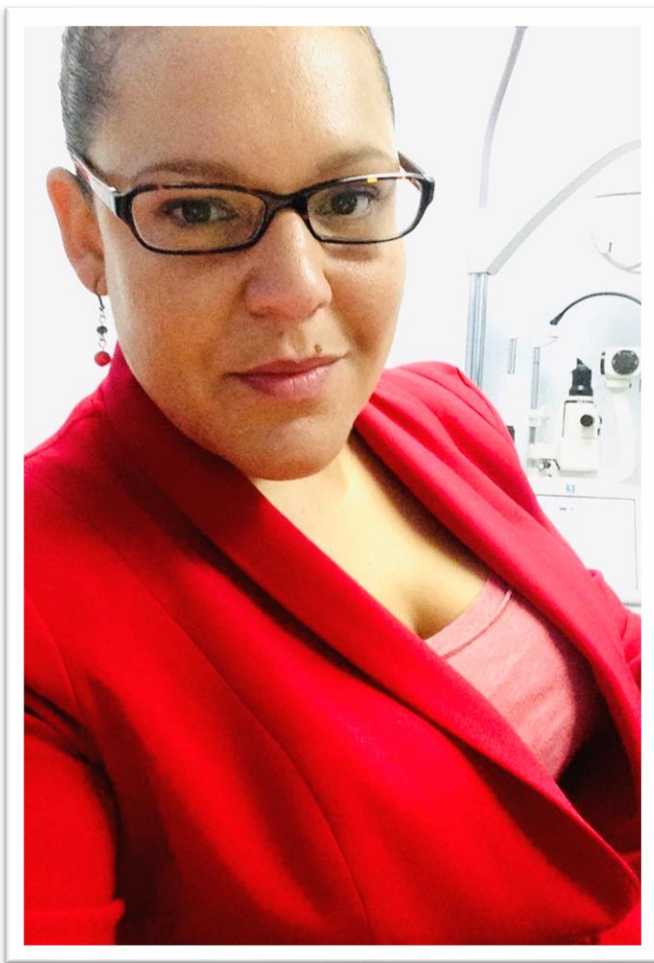
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Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (2020). <https://www.accc.gov.au/media-release/new-safety-standard-for-projectile-toys>

About the Author



Elizabeth Anne has worked in the optical industry for over 25 years.

She is a past pupil of St. Joseph Convent, Port of Spain. She holds a Fellowship Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing from The Fellowship of Dispensing Opticians, England (1999), a Bachelor of Science (Hons) degree from Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland (2003), and is a member of the College of Optometrist, UK since 2005. In 2007, she obtained a Certificate of Completion in Therapeutic Management of Ocular Disease from the Southern College of Optometry, Memphis, Tennessee. She was a former Secretary on the executive of the Trinidad and Tobago Optometrist Association (2007).

Her clinical interests are Myopia Management and Dry Eye Therapy. She continues to work as an Optometrist at Ferreira Optical Limited.