

Living with One Good Eye

After loss of vision in one eye, a person can still live a full productive life at whatever age the loss occurs. Children growing up with only one good eye develop and learn along with their age groups. Older children or adults who suddenly lose vision in one eye will go through a readjustment period, but they generally continue to lead a personally satisfying and active lifestyle.

President Woodrow Wilson served eight years after losing the vision in his left eye. The great athlete Babe Ruth was “one-eyed” with 20/200 vision in his left eye due to severe amblyopia (lazy eye). Several popular television stars and entertainers have good vision in only one eye.

Vision loss

From childhood through middle adult life, eye injuries are the leading cause of vision loss. In later adult life, age-related changes, such as glaucoma, diabetes and macular degeneration, become the leading cause of blindness. Once vision is irreversibly impaired in one eye, taking care the remaining good eye becomes extremely important. *All possible protective measures should be taken to preserve the vision in the good eye because any loss of vision in that eye will cause a drastic change your lifestyle.*

Some possible consequences:

- Difficulty reading;
- Loss of job;
- Limited driver’s license (acuity worse than 20/40, best corrected vision);

- Loss of recreational skills;
- Legal (20/200) or total blindness.

Eye protection

Protection of the good eye cannot be stressed enough. At any age, appropriate eye protection should be worn at all times equally during work, play and in sports or hobby activities. Children especially should be taught the importance of protecting their good eye and avoiding unnecessary risks.

For everyday protection, impact-resistant spectacles with sturdy frames are sufficient. **Poly-carbonate** lenses are recommended because polycarbonate is extremely strong material. Impact-resistant eyeglasses can be made in many attractive styles.

Protective eyewear should be worn for the remainder of one’s life, even if no prescription is necessary for the correction of vision. Contact lenses alone should not be used, because they do not offer the same protection from injury.

Sports participation

Young, active people are at a higher risk for eye accidents and sports injuries. Protective eye equipment should always be used for sports. While the risk of eye injuries does vary with the type of sports activity, comparing “contact” and “non-contact” sports offers little guidance regarding eye safety. Racquetball, for example, is considered a “non-contact” sport even though the risk to the eyes is high. Participating in sports requires full understanding of the risks involved and proper eye protection. For a young child, the parents must participate in making such decisions.

Examples of high eye-risk sports that should always be avoided are:

- Boxing
- Wrestling
- Full contact martial arts

Work and recreation

Many work and recreation activities carry a risk of eye injury. The appropriate eye protection should be worn. Particles that shoot out when using tools, as well as common objects like pencils and sticks, can be a threat to the eye.

Industrial safety glasses, side shields, full-face shields or even special goggles may be necessary for some activities. As in sports, certain industrial or hobby activities (e.g. fireworks) may present such a high risk to the eyes that they should be avoided by the person with one “good” eye.

Just as automobiles are a fact of modern life, so are automobile accidents. Protective eye wear and seat belts should always be worn so that the eyes are less likely to be bruised or cut in case of impact.

Maintaining a healthy eye

The better or remaining eye does not “wear out” or “work harder,” even though it provides most or all of a person’s vision. Nevertheless, regular eye examinations by an ophthalmologist are even more important than for the normal-sighted person. Examinations should be on a schedule recommended by your ophthalmologist or at any time new symptoms or problems develop.

In conclusion

An active and satisfying lifestyle is still possible for someone with good vision in only one eye. Proper eye protection, common sense and regular medical eye examinations are necessary to help ensure a full and productive life.

Why are regular medical eye examinations important for everyone?

Eye disease can occur at any age. Many eye diseases do not cause symptoms until the disease has done damage. Since most blindness is preventable if diagnosed and treated early, regular medical examinations by an ophthalmologist are very important.

Compliments of Your Ophthalmologist

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