

# January 2007 - National Eye Care Month

- American Academy of Ophthalmology, P.O. Box 7424, San Francisco, CA 94120-7424. (415) 561-8500. Fax: (415) 561-8533. [www.ao.org](http://www.ao.org)
- Prevent Blindness Oklahoma, 6 N.E. 63rd, #150, Oklahoma City, OK 73105. (405) 848-7123. [www.preventblindnessok.org](http://www.preventblindnessok.org)



More than 40,000 people a year suffer eye injuries while playing sports. For all age groups, sports related eye injuries occur most frequently in baseball, basketball and racquet sports. Almost all sports-related eye injuries can be prevented. Whatever your game, whatever your age, you need to protect your eyes!

## Take the following steps to avoid sports' eye injuries:

- Wear proper safety goggles (lensed polycarbonate protectors) for racquet sports or basketball
- Use batting helmets with polycarbonate face shields for youth baseball
- Use helmets and face shields approved by the U.S. Amateur Hockey Association when playing hockey
- Know that regular glasses do not provide enough protection

## The most common causes of eye injuries to children include:

- Misuse of toys
- Falls from beds, against furniture, on stairs and when playing with toys
- Misuse of everyday tools and objects (work and garden tools, knives and forks, pens and pencils)
- Contact with harmful household products (detergents, paints, glues, etc.)
- Automobile accidents

## Finding and removing hazards

- **At Home:** Use safety gates at top and bottom of stairs. Pad or cushion sharp corners. Put locks on all cabinets and drawers that kids can reach. Keep all sharp or pointed objects out of kid's hands. Put away all hazardous chemicals, including cleaning solutions. Keep your child out of work areas.
- **At Play:** Read all warnings and instructions on toys. Avoid toys with sharp edges or hard points, spikes and rods. Don't buy toys that fly or shoot. Be aware of items in playgrounds and play areas that are hazards. Make sure your child wears proper eye protection when **playing sports**.
- **On the Road:** Make sure children are properly secured in baby carriers and child safety seats and that the seat and shoulder belts fit well. **Children age 12 and younger should never ride in the front seat.** Store loose items in the trunk, or secure on the floor. Any loose object can become dangerous in a crash.

## If you notice the following signs, your child has an eye injury, get medical help right away.

- Your child has obvious pain or trouble seeing.
- Your child has a cut or torn eyelid.
- One eye does not move as well as the other.
- One eye sticks out compared to the other.
- The eye has an unusual pupil size or shape.
- There is blood in the clear part of the eye.
- Your child has something in the eye or under the eyelid that can't be easily removed.
- If you suspect that your child has a vision problem, visit an eye doctor for an exam.

# National Volunteer Blood Donor Month

- American Association of Blood Banks (AABB), Department of Communications and Public Relations, 8101 Glenboork Road, Bethesda, MD 20814-2749. Phone: (301) 215-6495 or (301) 215-6526 or (301) 907-6977. [www.aabb.org](http://www.aabb.org)
- Oklahoma Blood Institute, 1001 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, OK 73104. OKC 1-800-375-8778 or (405) 297-5700. Tulsa: 1-800-584-7557 or (918) 477-0400. [www.obl.org](http://www.obl.org)
- American Red Cross. (202) 303-4498. [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Blood is traditionally in short supply during the winter months due to the holidays, travel schedules, inclement weather and illness. January, in particular, is a difficult month for blood centers to collect blood donations. A reduction in turnout can put our nation's blood inventory at a critical low. Every day in our country approximately 38,000 units of blood are required in hospitals and emergency treatment facilities for patients with cancer and other diseases, for organ transplant recipients and to help save the lives of accident victims.

## ★ How much blood is donated each year?

AABB estimates that eight million volunteers donate blood each year. According to the National Blood Data Resource Center (NBDRC) about 15 million units of whole blood and red blood cells were donated in the United States in 2001. Typically, each donated unit of blood, referred to as whole blood, is separated into multiple components, such as red blood cells, plasma, platelets, and cryoprecipitated AHF (antihemophilic factor). Each component generally is transfused to a different individual, each with different needs.

## ★ Who needs blood?

The need for blood is great — on any given day, an average of 38,000 units of red blood cells are needed. Blood transfusions often are needed for trauma victims — due to accidents and burns — heart surgery, organ transplants, and patients receiving treatment for leukemia, cancer or other diseases, such as sickle cell disease and thalassemia. NBDRC reports that in 2001, nearly 29 million units of blood components were transfused. With an aging population and advances in medical treatments and procedures requiring blood transfusions, the demand for blood continues to increase.

## ★ What are the criteria for blood donation?

To be eligible to donate blood, a person must be in good health and generally must be at least 17 years of age (although some states permit younger people, with parental consent, to donate). Minimum weight requirements may vary among facilities, but generally donors must weigh at least 110 pounds. Most blood banks have no upper age limit. All donors must pass the physical and health history examinations given prior to donation.

Volunteer donors provide nearly all blood used for transfusion in the United States. The donor's body replenishes the fluid lost from donation in 24 hours. It may take up to two months to replace the lost red blood cells. Whole blood can be donated once every eight weeks (56 days). Two units of red blood cells can be donated at one time using a process known as red cell apheresis. This type of donation can be made every 16 weeks.