

The Most Ordinary Things Can Cause the Most Extraordinary Eye Injuries

When most people go out to mow the lawn, jump-start the car or get ready to do some spring cleaning, the last thing they think about is protecting their eyes, but it should be first on their mind.

October is Eye Injury Prevention Month, and Eye M.D.s across the country are urging Americans to protect their eyes from the extraordinary damage often caused by the most ordinary of activities.

More than one million people suffer from eye injuries each year and 90 percent of these eye injuries could be been prevented if the individual was wearing appropriate protective eyewear (with "ANSI Z87.1" marked on the lens or frame).

People should keep a pair of goggles in the trunk for when they need to jump-start their car. Battery acid sparks and debris flying from car batteries can severely damage the eyes.

Many household chemicals, such as cleaning fluids, detergents and ammonia, are extremely hazardous and can burn the eye's delicate tissues. When using chemicals, always read instructions and labels carefully, work in a well-ventilated area and make sure spray nozzles point away from you and others before spraying. Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after use.

Before using a lawnmower, power trimmer or edger, check for debris. Stones, twigs and other items can become dangerous projectiles shooting from the blades of a lawnmower, potentially injuring your eyes or those of innocent bystanders.

Also warn people about one of the most dangerous activities, in terms of eye injuries. Each year hundreds of people end up with terrible eye injuries and burns from fireworks that are set off in the backyard. The majority of victims are bystanders and children. There's just no way to use fireworks at home safely, even sparklers because they burn at 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit, hot enough to melt gold. Go see a show put on by the pros - it's safer, cheaper and more spectacular.

Prevention is the first and most important step in avoiding serious eye injuries, so be sure to protect your eyes with appropriate protective eyewear.

Eye health care is provided by the three "O's" – opticians, optometrists and ophthalmologists. It is the ophthalmologist, or Eye M.D., who can treat it all – eye diseases and injuries, and perform eye surgery.