



American Optometric Association  
Sports Vision Section ◆



# Healthy eyes for peak performance



In just about every aspect of life, what we see determines what we do. Good eye health and optimal vision are critical factors for better performance at school, at work, and at play.

*Uncorrected or insufficiently corrected vision should not be the reason we don't feel confident about performing at our best.*

### Detecting problems early

The best way to detect vision problems is through regular comprehensive eye examinations beginning early in life.

Begin a lifetime of healthy vision for your infant at [www.infantsee.org](http://www.infantsee.org).



## Be the best you can be

Successful athletes of all ages need speed, strength, talent—and good eyes. Doctors estimate that up to 80 percent of the information we take in during sports comes from our eyes<sup>1</sup>. Vision that is even slightly blurred reduces the performance of tennis players and archers by as much as 25 percent<sup>2</sup>.

Of course, the advantages of good vision carry well beyond sports. Whether it's performing in a classroom, working on a computer, riding a bicycle, driving a car, or text messaging a friend, crisp, clear vision is critical to good performance.



## More than just seeing better

*Both glasses and contact lenses are good options for people who need vision correction. Through a comprehensive eye examination, your eye doctor can help you determine the best choices for you and your family.*

A growing body of research shows that contact lenses provide a number of benefits beyond simply correcting a child's vision. This should give parents greater confidence in allowing children to choose the option of contact lens wear<sup>3</sup>.

In one study that followed nearly 500 nearsighted children over three years, children who wore contact lenses felt better about their physical appearance, acceptance among friends, and ability to play sports than children who wore glasses. Those children who disliked wearing glasses also felt more confident about their schoolwork when they began wearing contact lenses<sup>4</sup>.

Parents sometimes worry that contacts might be hard for kids to take care of or might even make their vision worse.

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*Studies demonstrate that children, some as young as 8 years old who require vision correction, are capable of contact lens wear and care.<sup>5</sup>*

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Research also confirms that their vision is no more likely to get worse with contact lenses than with glasses<sup>6</sup>.

Doctors will typically evaluate children's maturity and level of parental support in deciding whether they are ready for contact lenses. Working with parents, they can choose from a wide variety of contact lens options, including lenses for astigmatism, reusable contacts (replaced every two weeks or monthly), and daily-disposable contacts, to find the best fit for each child.





## Protect your eyes

The American Optometric Association's Sports Vision Section and Safe Kids Worldwide strongly recommend the use of protective eyewear for most sports. Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat more than 40,000 sports-related eye injuries. More than one-third of the victims are children.

In fact, sports represent the number one cause of eye injuries in children under the age of sixteen. The sports with the highest risk — for which eye protection is available — include basketball, baseball, hockey, football, lacrosse, fencing, paintball, water polo, racquetball, soccer and downhill skiing. It is estimated that more than 90 percent of these injuries could be prevented simply by wearing proper helmets or goggles<sup>7</sup>.

Even if you don't need glasses or contact lenses, getting regular eye examinations is a great way to make sure your eyes stay healthy.

Visit <http://www.aoa.org/eye-exam-frequency.xml> to learn how often children and adults should get an eye examination.

If anyone in your family wears contact lenses, be sure to follow your eye doctor's instructions for cleaning, caring for, and changing the lenses.



### Did you know?

Did you know that extended exposure to the same harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays that affect skin can also harm your eyes?

Whether you are playing softball or beach volleyball in July, or skiing and snowboarding in January, your eyes are exposed to the sun's rays. While most sunglasses can help block UV rays from entering through the lenses, most frame styles do not prevent rays from reaching the eyes from the sides, top, and bottom of the glasses. For those who need vision correction, the greatest measure of UV protection can be achieved with a combination of UV-absorbing sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat and UV-blocking contact lenses. For more information visit: <http://www.aoa.org/UV-Protection.xml>.

Have trouble remembering when to change your contact lenses?

Visit [www.acuminder.com](http://www.acuminder.com), a free reminder service to help you stay on track.

**American Optometric  
Association**  
243 N. Lindbergh Blvd  
St. Louis, MO 63141  
Phone: (314) 983-4148  
www.aoa.org

**Safe Kids Worldwide**  
1301 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Suite 1000  
Washington DC 20004  
Phone: (202) 662-0600  
www.safekids.org

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