



Wednesday, 10 October 2002

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### ***Open your eyes to eye injury***

#### **World Sight Day 10<sup>th</sup> October 2002**

World Sight Day is a global campaign that sets aside one day every year to focus worldwide attention on critical vision loss problems and raise awareness about prevention of avoidable blindness and vision impairment. Every 5 seconds one person in our world goes blind. In Australia 50% of blindness and 70% of vision impairment is treatable or preventable.

Eye injuries that result from playing sport can be serious and are mostly preventable. Kidsafe WA says that while the incidence of childhood sport -related eye injuries is low it is important to remember that the consequence of eye injuries can be very severe and permanent. Dr Mary Bremner, paediatric ophthalmologist and member of Kidsafe WA, says that '30% of sports related eye injuries in children have the potential for permanent loss of eyesight. Beginners in sport are more prone to eye injuries than advanced players because they are yet to learn or refine the necessary skills to master the specific sport skills and play safely'. Developmental skills, coordination, balance, reaction time, speed and strength all take time to develop fully in a child.

The sports most commonly associated with eye injuries are those where balls and other projectiles are propelled at speed or where contact can be made with other player's racquets, bats, elbows or fingers. When playing sport, most children are encouraged to wear protective equipment such as mouthguards, helmets, shin pads, wrist, elbow and knee guards to safeguard against injuries yet the use of sports eye protection is not as frequent despite Australian Standards sports eye guards being available since 1992.

Kidsafe WA says, 'it's as simple as adding a pair of Australian Standards sport eye guards to our children's sport equipment bags'.

***Don't lose sight of your vision!***

**- End -**

Contact

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