

## **Eye Injuries – A Serious Threat**

When professional soccer season begins, athletic trainers and their medical staffs review assessment, management and treatment techniques for all types of injuries. Eye injuries can be one type of incident that occurs infrequently, but can be a very serious injury if not recognized and treated properly.

Direct trauma to the eye can cause bleeding within the front (anterior chamber) of the eye between the cornea and the iris. The trauma can be blunt or closed and may be a result of a flying object such as a ball or another player's elbow. The bleeding within the front of the eye is called a hyphema. Injury to the eye may initially be minor but may become more severe in 3-5 days. Symptoms may include: Pain, blurred vision and the eye may appear to be filled with blood. Hyphema is a medical emergency. Call your ophthalmologist (a medical doctor who specializes in eye care and surgery) for an immediate appointment. If you cannot contact your ophthalmologist, go to a hospital's emergency department.

To determine the severity of the hyphema your ophthalmologist will perform a complete eye examination, visual acuity test, take intraocular pressures. If the injury is severe enough additional tests will be performed such as a CT scan. Treatment includes bed rest with head elevated, avoiding strenuous activities, avoid medications with aspirin and nonsteroidals, eye drops to control pain and pressure may be prescribed as well as other medications as directed by the physician. Tylenol may be prescribed for pain. Do not cover the eye unless directed by the physician. If eye pain increases, return to the doctor immediately. Appointments will include daily visits for 5 days, then 1 week after the last visit and a one month follow-up. Every year after the injury, you will need to be examined for glaucoma as the eye's drainage system could have been damaged by the trauma. To prevent future injury to the eye, wear protective eyewear whenever playing a sport that recommends vision protection.

For additional information contact your local athletic trainer or family ophthalmologist.

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