Fact 1: Ways in which children most commonly injure their eyes

- The eye can be injured in many ways. This ranges from something simple like a scratch to the cornea (clear front part of the eye), which will heal fairly quickly, to a penetrating eye injury which may need surgery.
- The bones around the eye are also at risk from blunt objects. These bones can easily fracture.
- A child is more likely to injure their eye in an environment in which there is poor adult supervision.
- Most commonly the child will injure their own eye or another child’s eye by using an object inappropriately. A child might, for example, use a stick or a knife as a toy.
- It is important to know that any eye injury may lead to poor vision, blindness or even the removal of the eye.

Fact 2: Common objects that can cause harm

- Any object can cause an eye injury.
- The most serious eye injuries are usually caused by sharp items such as pens, pencils, scissors, knives, sticks and metal objects.

Fact 3: Children at highest risk of eye injury

Australian studies have found that the groups at highest risk of an eye injury are:
- children aged between 3 and 9 years, with a peak at 5 years.
- boys—who are three times more likely to suffer an eye injury than girls.
Fact 4: Eye risks for children 1–2 years

- They are usually well supervised, so eye injuries are often caused by an older child or when an adult leaves a potentially dangerous item within the child’s reach.
- They might walk or fall into things at their eye level, such as a sharp corner of a low table.

Fact 5: Eye risks for children 3–8 years

- They often become involved in more risky and dangerous play and may not be as well supervised by adults as younger children.
- They are more likely to injure their eyes using objects such as sticks, stones, pens and knives as weapons.
- Sports injuries usually occur at this age due to limited skills or carelessness.

Fact 6: Eye risks for children 9-16 years

- They are often the least well supervised by adults and may have access to more dangerous goods such as chemicals, fireworks and very sharp items.
- They might injure their eyes playing sport at a more physically demanding and competitive level.

Fact 7: Locations where eye injuries in children most commonly occur

- Home, both indoors and outdoors, is the most common place for an eye injury.
- Sporting venues are also a likely place for an eye injury to occur.
- Schools and childcare centres are relatively safe places, as children have limited access to objects that can cause harm and have high levels of supervision.

Fact 8: Time of day when childhood eye injuries most commonly occur

Australian studies have shown that children most commonly sustain eye injuries on the weekend, between the hours of 4–6 pm.
Fact 9: Protecting children from eye injuries

• Always supervise your child at home, both indoors and outdoors.
• Children will often suffer an eye injury from copying an adult’s behaviour, so make sure you are a good ‘eye safe’ role model.
• Remove or protect all indoor and outdoor objects that are at your child’s eye level and can cause harm.
• Ensure all furniture has rounded edges, or that you have adequately padded those pieces that do not.
• Remove all hazardous chemicals and ensure that they are located in locked cupboards well out of your child’s reach.
• Remove any broken toys from your home.
• Trim low hanging tree branches back to the trunk.
• Children should wear protective eyewear and be situated at a safe distance or inside when an adult is mowing the lawn.
• Encourage your child to wear sunglasses and a hat when outdoors.
• Teach your child to take care in the presence of animals.
• If your child has poor vision in one eye it is recommended that you speak to your eye specialist about extra eye protection when playing sport.

Fact 10: What to do if a child suffers an eye injury

• Apply the appropriate first aid (see first aid fact sheet) and seek medical attention immediately.