Eye Injury – Restaurant Safety – Meeting Kit



WHAT'S AT STAKE

Eye injuries at restaurants are injuries that can occur to the eyes while dining or working in a restaurant are caused by a variety of factors, including small objects, cleaning products or other hazardous materials, bacteria or other contaminants, scratches or cuts on the cornea and blunt force trauma to the eye.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

CONSEQUENCES OF EYE INJURIES FOR WORKERS AT RESTAURANTS

- **Corneal abrasions:** Small scratches or cuts on the cornea can be caused by flying objects such as broken glass or utensils, and can cause discomfort, sensitivity to light, and blurred vision.
- **Chemical burns:** Chemical burns to the eyes can occur from cleaning products or other hazardous materials used in the kitchen or dining area. These can cause severe pain, redness, and potentially permanent damage to the eye.
- **Eye infections:** Infections can occur if bacteria or other contaminants encounter the eye, such as from improperly washed hands or contaminated utensils.
- **Eye trauma:** Blunt force trauma to the eye can cause serious damage, such as a detached retina, which can lead to permanent vision loss.
- **Foreign body in the eye:** Small objects, such as food particles or broken glass, can become lodged in the eye and cause pain, irritation, and potentially infection.
- **Vision loss:** Eye injuries can cause permanent vision loss, which can significantly impact your quality of life. Depending on the severity of the injury, vision loss may be partial or complete.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

PRECAUTIONS CAN PREVENT EYE INJURIES AT RESTAURANT

- **Be mindful of your surroundings:** Pay attention to your surroundings, especially in busy or crowded areas of the restaurant. Avoid areas where there is a high risk of flying objects, such as near the kitchen or a busy bar.
- **Use utensils properly:** Use utensils, such as knives, forks, and spoons, properly to avoid injuring your eyes. Avoid using your fingers to tear food apart or hold

onto slippery items, as it could cause injury to your eye.
- **Wear eye protection:** If you are participating in a group activity that involves food items or if you are in an environment with a high risk of flying objects, consider wearing eye protection like safety glasses or goggles.
- **Alert the staff:** If you notice any potential hazards such as poorly stacked dishware, loose tablecloths or other hazards, alert the restaurant staff immediately.
- **Be cautious with hot liquids:** Be careful when consuming hot soups, teas, or other hot beverages. The steam rising from hot liquids can cause eye injuries, especially if you are leaning too close or the liquid spills.
- **Wash your hands:** Properly wash your hands before eating to prevent infections that can spread to the eyes.
- **Keep your distance from children:** If there are children around, be sure to keep a safe distance from them to prevent accidental injury from their behavior or actions.

BEST WORKER EYE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION TO AVOID EYE INJURIES AT RESTAURANTS

Hot grease can splatter and burn your eye. Hot cooking oil and grease can easily splash onto the eye and burn your cornea. This common injury can be avoided by wearing glasses or, at the very least, using a grease shield or lid on the pan. If hot grease splashes in your eye, immediately flush it with plenty of water. This will remove the grease and any particles. Don't use anti-redness drops to rinse your eyes. Artificial tears may soothe your eyes after a small grease splash but see your eye doctor as soon as possible if there is obvious injury, excessive pain, continuing symptoms or you're worried about your eye. You may be more susceptible to eye infections or other eye injuries while your eye is healing.

Watch out for bubbling sauces and splashing liquids. Any liquid that splashes in your eye can be uncomfortable. But food liquids may be especially dangerous. Fluids from food are often acidic and can cause your eyes to tear up and sting. Some foods, like raw chicken liquid, contain bacteria that could cause an eye infection. Simmering sauces can splash out of the pot and burn or blister your eyes. If this happens, flush your eyes with plenty of water. See an eye doctor right away if you see any damage to your eye or if any of your symptoms continue.

Spicy residues can stick to your fingers and end up in your eye. When you chop jalapeño peppers and use other spicy ingredients, your fingers retain oily residues that can end up in your eyes. Wash your hands thoroughly after preparing food. Or better yet, wear gloves while chopping vegetables and working with spices. If pepper or spice oils end up in your eye, flush with plenty of water and then wash your eyelids and the area around your eye with baby shampoo. Never put any soap directly in your eye.

Cleaning chemicals can cause blinding eye injuries. Cleaning products are among the top eye hazards in the kitchen. You should always wear eye protection when working with cleaning chemicals. Bleach, oven cleaners and other cleaning chemicals can cause serious, blinding eye injuries. If you get any cleaning products in your eyes, immediately flush with plenty of water and seek medical attention. The longer the exposure, the worse the damage can be.

Stay safe while using knives, scissors, and other sharps. Sharp objects are the third-most-common cause of eye injuries in kids. Be especially careful with knives, forks, scissors, and sharp objects when teaching young children to cook.

Don't slip! Keep floors clean and cabinet doors closed. Loose rugs, open cabinets and liquid spills on the floor could be more of a hazard to your eyes than you realize.

Falls are a top cause of eye injury in the United States. People 60 years old and older are especially prone to eye injuries from falls.

Keep food out of your eyes. Don’t fall for dangerous remedies or urban myths. Honey will not change your eye color and tea will not cure pink eye. Don’t put anything in your eye that hasn’t been designed for eye use. If you use sliced cucumber or other foods on the skin around your eyes, be careful not to let fluid leak into your eye.

Raw steak is not a safe or effective treatment for black eyes. In cartoons and old movies, people often put a raw steak on a black eye. This is not safe. The bacteria on raw meat can cause a serious eye infection. Other packaged frozen foods, like bagged frozen vegetables, could be contaminated by bacteria in your freezer or kitchen. It’s safer to use an ice pack or ice cubes wrapped in a clean towel.

FINAL WORD

Practicing eye safety at restaurants is an important part of maintaining your overall health and well-being. By taking steps to protect your eyesight, you can prevent potential injuries, promote safety, and enjoy your dining experience to the fullest.