

Note to teachers: For an excellent source of information on eye safety, see the original Vision Quest program kit that was distributed to all South Dakota educators last year. Didn't receive a kit? Just contact the South Dakota Optometric Society (see box below) as a limited supply of kits are still available.

Everyday your eyes are exposed to a wide variety of environments and activities. Consider how differently your eyes experience watching a movie at the theater, reading at school, riding your bike outdoors, playing baseball on a dusty field or cleaning out a barn! Each situation presents a different combination of light, wind, dryness, dust and debris, allergens and potential hazards.

As you grow older and assume more responsibility for your personal health care, it is important to be aware of environmental factors that can impact your vision, and to consider, in advance, how to protect the health, comfort and safety of your eyes.

The following chart will ask you to consider environmental factors present in common work and recreational situations. Individually, or with a small group of other students, place yourself in each situation and think about how the eyes can be protected and vision maximized. You may need to do some research in the school library or on the Internet and interview parents, teachers, your school nurse, coach or people who work in your community for advice.

Situation	Factors	Prevention/Treatment
You have been using your computer to research your homework on the Internet for over an hour and your eyes are getting tired.	What factors could be contributing to this discomfort?	How could you prevent or correct this situation?
The words that the teacher writes on the board in the front of the classroom always look blurry to you from your desk.	What factors could be contributing to this discomfort?	How could you prevent or correct this situation?
Every time you play with or brush your pet cat, your eyes water and you start to sneeze. Your cat also likes to sleep in your bed with you at night.	What might be the problem?	How could you prevent or correct this situation?
You want to use a can of spray paint to redecorate the frame of your old bicycle.	What discomfort and/or hazards might spray paint present for your eyes?	How could you prevent or correct this situation?

Note to parents: The best way to diagnose and treat many childhood eye and visual conditions is to obtain a comprehensive eye examination in addition to any school-provided visual screenings. The South Dakota Optometric Society recommends families obtain eye examinations every year for students age 6 through 18



Situation	Factors	Prevention/Treatment
<p>Your mom asks you to dust the rose bushes with a special pesticide powder that will kill mold and bugs.</p>	<p>What hazards might this dust present for your eyes and skin?</p>	<p>How could you prevent or correct this situation?</p>
<p>In a shop class, your teacher shows you how to use a power tool, a circular saw, to cut boards in half.</p>	<p>What hazards can power tools present for your eyes?</p>	<p>How could you prevent or correct this situation?</p>
<p>You've earned your license and are driving a car on the highway when a sudden downpour of rain hits. It is difficult to see the road, and you are not sure how well other drivers can see you.</p>	<p>What factors could cause danger for you and other drivers?</p>	<p>How could you prevent or correct this situation?</p>
<p>You love swimming at the local pool, but lately, you've noticed eye redness and puffiness after swimming.</p>	<p>What might be causing these eye irritations?</p>	<p>How can you prevent or correct the situation?</p>
<p>You know there is a tendency for some diseases that impact vision to run in families. These include glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetes and hypertension.</p>	<p>Using your parents as a resource, make a list of any blood relatives (grandparents, parents and their siblings, you and your siblings) who have any of these diseases. Describe the impact that the diseases present in your family can have on vision.</p>	<p>What is the best way to ensure that these diseases, should they arise in you, will be diagnosed and treated early?</p>

Situation	Factors	Prevention/Treatment
<p>It's after dark, and your dad asks you to find the family dog who is still wandering on the farm. The farm is not well lighted, and the ground is not even in all areas. There is also a road with traffic adjacent to part of your unfenced property.</p>	<p>What factors could cause danger for you, your dog or drivers on the road?</p>	<p>How could you prevent or correct this situation?</p>
<p>Your best friend wants to go rollerblading on a paved neighborhood parking lot.</p>	<p>What factors might present hazards for your eyes and general well-being?</p>	<p>How could you prevent or correct this situation?</p>
<p>You are starting your own lawn-mowing service and will be spending lots of summer days working in the bright sunshine.</p>	<p>What hazards can a lawnmower, power trimmer, and the sun's ultraviolet rays present for your eyes?</p>	<p>How could you prevent or correct this situation?</p>
<p>With your parents' permission, you've decided to visit your doctor of optometry for an eye examination.</p>	<p>Name the environmental factors to which YOUR eyes are exposed so you can discuss them with your optometrist.</p>	<p>What do you think your optometrist might recommend?</p>