

Atrium Health Navicent Physicians Urge Athletes to Protect Their Vision in Recognition of Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month

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MACON, Ga., Sept. 16, 2022 – Sports cause more than 40,000 injuries each year and eye injuries are a leading cause for blindness in American children. With fall sports beginning practices, doctors at Atrium Health Navicent Ophthalmology Macon urge athletes and parents of children who participate in sports to protect their vision.

Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month is observed each September and serves as a reminder for the importance of using eye protection to prevent injury.

Physicians at Atrium Health Navicent Ophthalmology Macon recommend that athletes of any age wear protective eyewear when participating in sports. Wearing proper protective eyewear can prevent 90 percent of sports-related eye injuries, according to the National Eye Institute.

Prescription glasses, sunglasses and occupational safety glasses do not provide adequate protection. Only 3-mm polycarbonate lenses should be used in protective sports eyewear. These impact-resistant lenses are available in plain and prescription forms.

Always wear protective eyewear in conjunction with a helmet. Don't assume that a helmet or faceguard will provide adequate protection alone because the eyes are still exposed to an opponent's fingers or other sports equipment. The helmet also can be knocked off, leaving eyes vulnerable to blunt trauma.

"Unprotected eyes can result in serious injuries during sports and can lead to serious health consequences," said Dr. Monali Sakhalkar, an Atrium Health Navicent Ophthalmology Macon ophthalmologist. "If you or your child sustains an eye injury during practice or a game, seek medical attention immediately."

For emergency situations, call 911 or seek care at the nearest emergency center. Atrium Health Navicent offers emergency care at the following locations:

- Atrium Health Navicent The Medical Center (777 Hemlock St., Macon)
- Atrium Health Navicent Beverly Knight Olson Children's Hospital (888 Pine St., Macon)
- Atrium Health Navicent Peach (1960 Hwy 247 Connector, Byron)
- Atrium Health Navicent Baldwin (821 North Cobb St., Milledgeville)
- Monroe County Hospital, an Atrium Health Navicent Partner (88 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Forsyth)
- Putnam General Hospital, an Atrium Health Navicent Partner (101 Greensboro Road, Eatonton)

If you or a loved one has an eye health concern or needs help choosing the best type of eye protection for your sport, physicians at Atrium Health Navicent Ophthalmology Macon are available to help. Visit navicenthealth.org/op or schedule an appointment at 478-633-8033.

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of healthcare in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.