

The Dangers of Eye and Vision Injuries in Car Accidents

Make sure your legal rights are protected if the wreck affects your sight

[Car accidents](#) happen at a single moment in time, but the injuries sustained can sometimes affect victims for the rest of their lives. This is especially true when it comes to eye and vision injuries. Damage to the eye can affect your ability to see, and that has dramatic implications for your career, your independence, and your quality of life.

Unfortunately, injuries to the head and face, including the eye, are far too common in car wrecks. Here's what you need to know.

Types of eye injuries sustained in car accidents

There are numerous ways the eyes can be damaged in a car crash. Hitting the airbag, a seat, or another hard surface inside the vehicle can cause eye injuries. So can flying glass and hazardous chemicals. Here are some of the eye injuries people often sustain in car wrecks:

- **Black eye:** A black eye just means there is bleeding under the skin, which causes the tissue surrounding the eye to become discolored. Black eyes can be caused by airbags or flying objects. While a black eye is not a serious injury in itself, it could be a sign of a more significant injury to the eye or brain.
- **Lacerations:** The eyelids can be cut by flying glass and other debris during a car crash. Again, injuries to the eyelid are usually not too serious, but there could be underlying damage to the eye itself that is cause for greater concern.
- **Chemical burns:** Leaking fluids, older airbags, and other vehicle components can release hazardous chemicals during a wreck. Exposure to those chemicals can cause temporary or permanent damage to the eye.
- **Orbital fractures:** The bones in the eye socket are some of the strongest in the body, so it takes a lot of force to break them. An orbital fracture is a serious injury in itself, and it's also commonly associated with severe eye or brain injuries.
- **Hyphema:** Some injuries can cause blood to enter the anterior chamber of the eye, becoming visible on the eyeball. If you see a hyphema, get emergency medical attention; it's often a sign of a serious eye injury.
- **Retinal detachment:** The retina, which is the light-sensitive layer of tissue inside the back of the eye, can be damaged or even detached by blows to the head in a car wreck. Retinal detachment can cause flashes of light, floaters, and a feeling of heaviness in the eye.
- **Vitreous hemorrhage:** This is a medical condition caused by bleeding into the vitreous humor, the gel that fills the space between the retina and the lens. Vitreous hemorrhage can cause blurred vision, floaters, and flashes of light, especially right after you wake up – lying down can cause blood to pool in the back of the eye.

- **Optic nerve damage:** Bleeding from certain injuries can cause increased pressure on the optic nerve, which transmits signals from the retina to the brain. Sufficient pressure on the optic nerve can even cut off circulation and cause severe damage or blindness.

While some eye injuries are visible immediately after an accident, others can take hours or days to develop – and they will get worse if not treated promptly. That’s one of the reasons it’s so important to get medical care right away. Go to the emergency room or urgent care, then follow up with your primary care provider and if necessary, a specialist such as an ophthalmologist.

The cost of an eye injury can be significant

Most people depend on vision for many aspects of their work and day-to-day life, so it’s impossible to overstate how serious the impact of an eye injury can be. In addition to medical expenses to treat the injury itself, people with eye injuries may be unable to work, leading to loss of income. Depending on how the injury affects your career, this may be a lifetime of lost wages, or you may need vocational retraining to transition to a career that does not depend on vision. Either way, those losses should be accounted for in your settlement.

In addition to those economic costs, people with eye injuries may have substantial non-economic losses, such as pain and suffering, emotional distress, and lost quality and enjoyment of life. If your loss of vision also affects your ability to enjoy your favorite hobbies or activities, then that’s a real loss that should be paid for by the person who caused the injury. Some eye injuries can also cause disfiguring damage, which in turn can affect your relationships and the impressions you make on people. That loss, too, should be accounted for.

Eye injuries are head injuries, and that means there’s always the risk of damage to another part of the head or brain. Concussions and traumatic brain injuries can change lives permanently, requiring a lifetime of care. Skull fractures may take months to heal. These costs and more should be accounted for in your settlement or verdict.

How an attorney can help if your eye was injured in a car crash

Getting legal advice is always important after a car accident, and eye injuries make it even more critical to get a good lawyer. In part, that’s because you need an attorney to calculate and build a case for the full value of your claim. That may include reviewing medical records and hiring expert witnesses – the eye is a fairly complex organ, and the right lawyers know how to explain to a jury exactly how the car wreck affected your vision. Experienced attorneys know how to advocate for the full compensation you need for the long-term cost of an eye injury, and they have a track record of beating the insurance companies and getting meaningful results.

As always, you need to act quickly. The sooner you get a lawyer involved, the sooner your attorney can start investigating your accident and gathering evidence in support of your claim. If you sustained an eye injury in a car accident, schedule your [free consultation](#) with Smith &

Hassler today. There are no obligations, and we offer legal representation to our clients on a contingency fee basis. That means there's no upfront money required, and you pay no attorney fees unless we win your case. To find out more, [contact us today](#).