



#39 SAFE SCISSOR USE

Information available from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission indicates about 5,000 youth aged five to 19 years were treated in hospitals for scissor injuries during 2006. Of this total, approximately 2,800 (almost 60%) of the injuries were lacerations to fingers. Many of the injuries were caused by the scissor user being careless or inattentive and could have been prevented by taking several simple precautions.

Safe Scissors Use

- Focus on the task at hand when using scissors. Stop using the scissors if you want to look up.
- When using scissors, cut in a direction away from your body and fingers, hands, arms, and legs.
- Do not attempt to catch a dropped pair of scissors. Let the scissors fall and then pick them up.
 - Use scissors in well-lighted work areas.
- Never engage in horseplay with scissors.
- Only use scissors for their intended cutting purpose. Do not use scissors for prying, screwing, scraping, or pounding.
- Do not run or climb while carrying a pair of scissors.
- Use the proper type of scissors for the task at hand. For example, use fabric scissors or pinking shears for cutting cloth and trimming scissors or a thread clip for cutting loose threads.
- Always pass a pair of scissors handle first to another person.
- When using shears, cut away from your body in regular, small strokes. Resting the shears against a table allows for better cutting control. It is easier to cut from right to left when you are right handed and from left to right when left handed.
- Practice good posture when using scissors. Avoid bending over a table when cutting with scissors.
- Whenever possible, use scissors with your wrist held in a neutral position and not bent at awkward angles or positions.
- A good practice is to keep your scissors sharp so they require less hand force to use.
- When necessary, have scissors sharpened by a professional scissors sharpener.
- Regularly clean dust, fluff, and cut fragments from the scissor cutting edges and blades.
- Periodically oil the screw slot and hinge area with a drop of fine oil.
- When finished, clean the work area (including the floor) and return scissors to their assigned storage space.
- If you suffer an injury while using a pair of scissors, tell your group leader, parent, or guardian. Seek medical attention if the injury is serious.



*Photograph Courtesy of
Tolumne County 4-H Program*