

DID YOU KNOW...?

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Buying Goggles

Taken from the book, *The Parents Guide to Swimming* by Alan Arata, Ph.D.

Buying a pair of goggles is not as simple as it might seem. There are many different kinds of goggles. The differences include size and shape, lens color, fog-free or anti-fog coatings, nose pieces, and the type of cushioning they use or don't use against the eyes.

Choose goggles that fit your swimmer's face and eyes. Having uncomfortable goggles can make practice miserable. Having goggles that fit well and stay on during a race is imperative for good swims.

Just as with suits, swimmers should have several pairs of goggles - as many as four different pairs. Swimmers should not use the same pair of goggles for practice as they do in a meet. Reason 1: Goggles wear out and lose their seal; swimmers are more likely to feel the effects of this when they dive off the block at a meet. Reason 2: Swimmers should wear their meet goggles tighter than their practice goggles. Swimmers are prone to forget to tighten their goggles before their first race and this can lead to goggles in the mouth or around the neck shortly after the dive. Reason 3: Shading factor; swimmers who practice or swim meets outside (especially for backstroke) should have goggles that provide some UV protection. Check the goggle package for UV protection wording. Don't assume it is provided just because the lenses are darker in color.

Regarding cushioning against the eyes, Swedish goggles don't have any. Many top notch swimmers prefer Swedish goggles for the tight seal. But a warning to those parents whose children switch to Swedish goggles - without cushioning gaskets, sore spots can develop around the eyes for the first week or so.

Some goggles have gaskets that are hypoallergenic which prevent eye or skin irritation. Silicone gaskets and Swedish goggles are hypoallergenic. Some goggles have foam gaskets; they are not recommended. A good bet for young swimmers is a silicone-plastic gasket goggle with anti-fog lenses. If the child swims outside, look for ones tinted "smoke" with UV protection. If the child swims inside, clear or yellow are good choices.

There *are* prescription goggles for swimmers without 20/20 vision. This doesn't help swimmers see underwater as much as it helps them see the pace clock, the coach's face, etc. If your child's vision is worse than 20/200, you might look into prescription goggles. If your child wears contact lenses, they can usually wear them *under* normal goggles. If they race in the lenses, it is wise to have them wear the disposable kind. Otherwise goggles coming off during a start could be costly for both swimmer *and* parent.

Colorado Swimming is dedicated to serving all its athletes and supports a philosophy of the right equipment for our swimmers. The Education Committee hopes you found this information helpful in supporting your athlete on the path for developing his/her potential.