

# Paintball warning

## Game not for children: trauma program chief

Montreal Children's Hospital officials are warning parents about the danger of paintball after a child was blasted in the face with a paintball gun last week and suffered a severe eye injury.

During a birthday party at a Montreal paintball facility, an 11-year-old took a direct hit to the eye after removing a protective mask. The child, whose parents did not want to be identified, was rushed to the Children's for treatment.

"The child suffered what is called a high-velocity blunt trauma, which caused severe damage to an eye and excessive bleeding," Robert Koenekoop, director of the hospital's ophthalmology department, said in a statement yesterday.

"It is still too early to say just

how extensive the damage will be, but, to be frank, some of the worst eye injuries I've treated are those caused while playing paintball."

Debbie Friedman, director of the hospital's trauma program, said paintball is inappropriate for young children. "Kids should be 16 years old before they can play paintball - period," she said in a statement. "I would like to see regulations making this activity off-limits until the age of 16."

In May 2005, the hospital sent a warning to parents about the dangers of paintball after Daniel Romagnolo, 10, was injured at the same facility under similar circumstances. Daniel has undergone a number of procedures, including surgery, to repair his eye.