

## Ask Dr. Pearle...

(NAPSA)—Regular visits to your eye doctor are so important, for your vision and for your overall good health. It's also important to understand the broad spectrum of eye health issues that affect you and your family. Here are some of the questions patients ask me and the independent doctors of optometry affiliated with Pearle Vision.

**I was told unprotected exposure to UV rays can cause sunburn to the eyes. Is this true?**

Prolonged exposure to high-range ultraviolet rays can cause significant eye damage. Photokeratitis, a painful sunburn of the cornea, can result from too much time in the sun without adequate protection. Symptoms may include discomfort, blurred vision and light sensitivity.

Studies have shown that cumulative unprotected sun exposure may cause premature aging and even cancer of the skin around the eyes, plus vision problems such as cataracts.

It's very important to wear sunglasses with adequate UV protection whenever you are outdoors. For optimum protection, look for lenses that block 99 to 100 percent of UV rays. UV rays are strongest



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between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., and are stronger at high altitudes and closer to the equator. The reflective qualities of sand and water amplify the effects of UV radiation, potentially harming unprotected eyes over even a brief period of time. Clouds may block brightness, but still allow 80 percent of UV light to reach eyes and skin.

In sunny conditions, babies and young children are more susceptible to UV damage because they have translucent corneas and lenses. Protect them with brimmed hats.

Take preventive measures now.

Visit the independent doctor of optometry at or next to the Pearle Vision near you for more information on protecting your eyes from the sun.

**When choosing sunglasses, which is more important, a dark tint or UV protection?**

"The darker the lens, the better the protection" is a common misconception. Actually, dark lenses without UV protection can cause more damage than not wearing sunglasses at all.

Wearing dark lenses without UV protection causes the pupil to dilate, allowing more harmful light into the eye. Keep in mind that the primary function of sunglasses is to protect the eyes from harmful ultraviolet rays. Dark lenses with adequate UV protection will protect your eyes.

While shopping for your next sunwear purchase, check with your eyewear professional to find out how much UV light the sunglasses block. For optimum protection, lenses should block 99 to 100 percent of UV rays.

Visit the independent doctor of optometry at or next to the Pearle Vision near you to learn more about protecting your eyes with UV-protected sunwear.