

Shade Eyes To Safeguard Vision

(NAPSA)—It may be eye-opening news to many to learn that prolonged sun exposure without the proper UV protection may cause severe eye conditions that can lead to a variety of vision disorders—but you can protect yourself and your family.

The Problem

Unfortunately, when it comes to protecting eyesight, only 28 percent of consumers said UV protection is the most important factor when purchasing sunglasses, placing a higher priority on glare reduction and comfortable vision, according to a new survey from the American Optometric Association (AOA).

If eyes are exposed to excessive amounts of UV radiation within a short time frame, such as a day at the beach, a temporary “sunburn” of the cornea, called photokeratitis, can occur. This painful condition can be serious and includes symptoms such as red eyes, foreign-body sensation or gritty feeling in the eyes, extreme sensitivity to light and excessive tearing.

Additionally, research has shown that long-term exposure to UV radiation increases the chance of developing cataracts, pterygium (an abnormal growth of the covering of the white of the eye onto the cornea) and eye cancer. It can also damage the retina, which may lead to macular degeneration—the leading cause of blindness in adults in the U.S.

What To Do

To help reduce the risks of UV



To protect your precious vision, wear sunglasses that block harmful UV rays.

exposure on the eyes, it's wise to start taking precautions as early as possible. Because the effects of solar radiation are cumulative, it's important to develop good protection habits early and have infants and children wear proper sunglasses whenever outdoors.

For optimal eye safety in the sun, wear sunglasses or contact lenses that offer appropriate UV protection, apply UV-blocking sunscreen around the eye area, and wear a hat to keep direct sunlight off the face and eyes. In addition, the AOA recommends that sunglasses should:

- Block more than 95 percent of UVA and more than 99 percent of UVB radiation

- Screen out 75 to 90 percent of visible light

- Be perfectly matched in color and free of distortion and imperfections

- Have lenses that are gray for proper color recognition of critical objects, such as traffic signals

- Have a frame that fits close to the eyes and is contoured to the shape of the head.

See The Eye Doctor

Another way to monitor eye health, maintain good vision and keep up-to-date on the latest in UV protection is by scheduling yearly comprehensive eye exams. To find an optometrist nearby or for additional information on UV protection, visit www.aoa.org.