

5 tips to protect your eyes from the sun

Most of us know the sun is bad for our skin, but did you know the sun wreaks havoc on the eyes, too? You may not be able to slather your eyes in sunscreen, but you can help shield them.

When it comes to protecting our skin from the sun, our options are as limitless as the rays beating down on us. Sunscreen comes in lotion, spray or stick form. It can have UVA and UVB filters. It's waterproof, sweatproof, anti-aging, hypoallergenic and tear-free. SPF ranges from 5 to 100. It can be found in makeup, lip balm, moisturizers – you name it.

But sunscreen is not designed for your eyes. At least not yet. It's still just as important to protect your eyes from the sun's harmful rays as it is to shield your skin.

Ultraviolet rays can lead to numerous health problems ranging from skin cancer around the eye to pink eye. They can also cause cataracts, photokeratitis (a kind of sunburn of the cornea) and pterygium (a white or creamy fleshy growth on the surface of the eye).¹

Most of us realize that staring into the sun for long periods of time isn't good for our long-term vision. But its rays actually reach our eyes in a variety of ways. Fresh snow, for instance, reflects as much as 80% of UV radiation, which means we can damage our eyes even by looking down...even in the winter.² Sea foam reflects about 25% of UV radiation, dry sand about 15%. Even grass, soil and water reflect UV rays (less than 10%).³

Researchers estimate we receive 80% of our lifetime exposure to UV rays before age 18. Compared to their parents, children have larger pupils (allowing more light into their eyes) and clearer lenses. Plus, kids are outside without eye protection more frequently and for longer periods than most adults.⁴

So what should you do to protect your eyes and your children's eyes? Here are 5 tips:

KNOW WHEN THE SUN IS STRONGEST

The highest ultraviolet radiation exposure for eyes and skin is actually in the morning and mid-afternoon, rather than at noon. Sun exposure to the eyes tends to be more continual in fall, winter and spring when the sun is lower in the sky.⁵

eye
Med



81%

Lifetime exposure to UV rays before the age of 18⁴

WEAR THE RIGHT LENSES

Don't skimp when it comes to sunglasses. Choose high-quality sunglasses with adequate UV protection to help reduce glare from protective surfaces.

WEAR THE RIGHT FRAMES

While most sunglasses can help block UV rays from entering through the lenses, most frame styles do not prevent rays from reaching the sides, top and bottom of the glasses.⁶

DOUBLE UP

Hats with brims offer no protection from UV rays reflected up from surfaces such as pavement, sand, water, etc. A combination of shades and a hat is best.⁶

WEAR THE RIGHT CONTACTS

Contacts that protect against UV rays are classified into 2 categories: Class I and Class II. Class I UV-blockers provide the greatest measure of UV protection.⁷ Talk with your eye doctor about the best UV-blocking contact lens options for you.

So the next time you're applying sunscreen, make sure you're protecting your eyes, too.

¹"How can UV rays damage your eyes?" Prevent Blindness, <http://www.preventblindness.org/how-can-uv-rays-damage-your-eyes>. Accessed April 2019.

²"How to educate patients about UV protection this winter," American Optometric Association, <https://www.aoa.org/news/clinical-eye-care/how-to-educate-patients-about-uv-protection-this-winter?sso=y>. Accessed December 2019.

³UV radiation," World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/uv/faq/whatisuv/en/index3.html>. Accessed December 2019.

⁴"Protecting children from ultraviolet radiation," World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/uv/resources/archives/fs261/en>. Archived 11 December 2009. Accessed December 2019.

⁵Sasaki H. UV exposure to eyes greater in morning, late afternoon. Proc. 111th Ann. Meeting Japanese Ophthalmologic Soc., Osaka, Japan, April, 2007.

⁶"Recommended types of sunglasses," American Academy of Ophthalmology, <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/glasses-contacts/sunglasses-recommended-types>. Accessed December 2019.

⁷"UV protection with contact lenses," American Optometric Association, <https://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/caring-for-your-vision/uv-protection/uv-protection-with-contact-lenses>. Accessed December 2019.



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We all love sunny days, but unprotected eyes might not agree. UV rays can cause cataracts, macular degeneration, vision loss and eye sunburn – even in the winter time.¹

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¹ "How Can UV Rays Damage Your Eyes?" Prevent Blindness, <https://www.preventblindness.org/how-can-uv-rays-damage-your-eyes>, Accessed September 2019

² "Recommended Types of Sunglasses," American Academy of Ophthalmology, <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/glasses-contacts/sunglasses-recommended-types>, Accessed September 2019

³ Redeemable at participating Sunglass Hut stores in the U.S. and online at sunglasshut.com. Excludes Cartier, Celine, Chanel, Costa, Dior, Maui Jim, Michael Kors, Ray-Ban Junior, Ray-Ban Disney, Tiffany, Tom Ford, Vogue Junior, Oakley NFL, SGH collaborations (Sarah Jessica Parker, AlexaChung, Off-White), Oliver Peoples, Alain Mikli and Starck. Limit one discount per transaction. Not valid with any other coupons, discounts or promotional offers. This offer is not good on accessories, gift card purchases, gift wrap, shipping, taxes, returns or exchanges. No cash-back value, cannot be redeemed for cash, may not be sold or transferred and will not be replaced if lost, stolen or damaged. Valid in the U.S. only. Offer valid until 12/31/2021. Coupon code required to redeem. Sunglass Hut at Hudson's Bay and select Sunglass Hut airport locations are unable to honor.

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