

Protect Your Eyes this Summer

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Sunny days filled with outdoor activities are the highlight of summer. While most people understand the importance of protecting their skin from the harmful rays of the sun, that’s not always the case when it comes to protecting their eyes. Just as sunscreen should be a part of your daily routine, sunglasses and hats should be part of your daily wardrobe.

Sunglasses don’t have to be expensive, but they do need to meet certain criteria to protect your eyes. Wear sunglasses labeled “100% UV Protection” or “UV400,” meaning they block both UV-A and UV-B rays. Pay attention to the fit, too, and avoid styles that leave a large gap at the sides or on top. Oversized or wraparound sunglasses are best. As an added measure, consider polarized lenses, which reduce the intensity of the sun’s reflection off surfaces such as water and light sand. Look for these same features in swim goggles.

One caveat — beware of souvenir shop or “novelty” sunglasses, particularly when it comes to children’s choices. While they may have dark lenses and look real, they can do more harm than good if they don’t provide the proper UV protection. Wearing dark lenses causes pupils to dilate which increases UV exposure to the eyes.

Finally, both adults and children should take these measures. The World Health Organization estimates that as much as 80 percent of a person’s lifetime UV ray exposure happens prior to age 18. The sun protection we offer ourselves and our children today will directly affect our eye health tomorrow.

Happy summer!



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