



FOCUS ON EYE HEALTH

Shining a Light on Sun Safety



How Does Ultraviolet (UV) Light Affect Your Eyes?

While most people are aware of the dangers that the sun's UV rays can pose to our skin, not everyone realizes the dangers UV rays pose to our eyes.

Avoidable Risks: Prolonged exposure to UV rays can increase the risk of cataracts, growths on the eyes, sunburned eyes and cancer. The sun's rays can be even more harmful to those who already have eye disorders such as cataracts, macular degeneration and retinal disease.

Ranges of UV Radiation: The three ranges of UV radiation are UV-A, UV-B and UV-C.¹

- **UV-A** rays can hurt your central vision, damaging the macula – a part of the retina at the back of your eye.
- **UV-B** rays are mostly absorbed in the front part of your eye in the cornea and lens. They can cause more damage to your eye than UV-A rays.
- **UV-C** rays, though greatly damaging, are absorbed by the Earth's atmosphere—therefore, they do not pose a great threat to us.²

How Can You Help Protect Your Eyes?

Take the following steps to help protect your eyes against harmful UV Rays.

Wear Sunglasses: Select a pair that offers 99-100% UV protection of UV-A and UV-B rays, along with reduced glare. Wrap-around options offer increased protection.³

Avoid UV-Intense Conditions: If possible, avoid the following circumstances.

- **Reflection:** UV rays that reflect off of water, snow or sand can be just as dangerous as direct sunlight.
- **Altitude:** More UV rays reach the ground at higher elevations than at lower elevations.
- **Time of Day:** The sun's rays are strongest at the middle of the day.⁴

VBA offers plans that provide easier access to vision care.

To learn more, visit vbaplans.com.

400 Lydia Street, Suite 300 | Carnegie, PA 15106 | 1-800-432-4966 | www.vbaplans.com

The information contained above is intended to be educational in nature, does not constitute medical advice, and should not be relied on as a substitute for actual professional medical advice, care or treatment. If you have any vision or other health related concerns, VBA encourages you to immediately contact your optometrist/ophthalmologist, or any other competent, licensed, medical professional.

1. Prevent Blindness (<https://preventblindness.org/uv-rays-can-harm-eyes/>) 2. Caring Village (<https://www.caringvillage.com/2017/07/19/top-5-eye-problems-resulting-from-uv-exposure/>) 3. American Academy of Ophthalmology (<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/sun>) 4. American Cancer Society, Inc. (<https://www.cancer.org/healthy/be-safe-in-sun/uv-protection.html>) 5. Medical Xpress (<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-05-americans-vision-sun.html>) 6. The Vision Council (<https://thevisioncouncil.org/content/uv-eye-protection>) 7. OCLI Vision (<https://www.ocli.net/blog/7-facts-about-vision-sun-damage-during-uv-safety-month/>) 8. Healthline (<https://www.healthline.com/health/eye-health/sunburned-eyes>)



Take Care of Your Eyes

34% of adults have experienced symptoms of prolonged UV exposure.⁵ You can prevent this exposure by taking the precautions needed to protect your eyes from harmful UV rays.

Did You Know?



27% of American adults report that they don't typically wear sunglasses when spending time outdoors.⁶



90% of visible, premature aging that occurs around our eyes is caused primarily from UV damage.⁷



Short-term effects of sun exposure can cause swollen or red eyes, tearing or hypersensitivity to light.⁸