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July is UV Safety Month

While some exposure to sunlight can be enjoyable, too much is dangerous, causing immediate effects like blistering sunburns, as well as longer-term problems like eye damage, wrinkles, premature aging and skin cancer.

Everyone is at risk for eye damage that can lead to vision loss from exposure to the sun. Recent studies have shown that prolonged exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays without protection may cause serious eye conditions that can lead to vision loss and blindness.

It's important to protect your eyes from acute damage caused by even a single outing on a very bright day. Excessive exposure to ultraviolet light reflected off of sand, snow or pavement can damage the eye's surface. Reflected sunlight can be the most dangerous type of UV light because it is intensified. Similar to sunburns, eye surface burns usually disappear within a couple of days, but may lead to further complications later in life.

To ensure your eyes are protected, wear sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat. You must remember to wear them whenever you're outside. Don't be fooled by a cloudy day. The sun's rays can still burn through the haze and thin clouds. When selecting sunglasses, make sure they block 99 to 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays. Don't be deceived by color or cost. The ability to block UV light is not dependent on the darkness of the lens or the price tag.

People of all ages are at risk for damage to their eyes from UV rays, including children. Remember to protect your children's eyes also with sunglasses and a hat.

Summer is a great time to have fun outdoors. It's also a time to take precautions to avoid sunburns, which can increase your risk of skin cancer.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays appears to be the most important environmental factor involved with developing skin cancer. During the summer months, UV radiation tends to be greater.

To help prevent skin cancer while still having fun outdoors, regularly use sun protective practices such as

- **Seek shade**, especially during midday hours (10 a.m.–4 p.m.), when UV rays are strongest and do the most damage.
- **Cover up** with clothing to protect exposed skin. A long-sleeved shirt and long pants with a tight weave are best.
- **Get a hat** with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears, and neck.



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- **Grab shades** that wrap around and block as close to 100% of both UVA and UVB rays as possible.
- **Rub on sunscreen** with sun protective factor (SPF) 15 or higher, and both UVA and UVB protection.

It's always wise to choose more than one way to cover up when you're in the sun. Use sunscreen and put on a shirt... Seek shade and grab your sunglasses... Wear a hat, but rub on sunscreen too. Combining these sun protective actions helps protect your skin from the sun's damaging UV rays.