



# Eye on Health

## Eyes Need Protection While Skiing

(NAPSA)—Taking a few precautions before you hit the slopes can help make skiing safe and fun.

“Most people think about their physical fitness for skiing, but they also need to protect their eyes,” said Dr. Reza Haque, spokesman for Novartis Ophthalmics North America. “Their ‘fitness program’ for their eyes begins with a pair of sunglasses that blocks harmful ultraviolet rays. Most people do not realize it, but they are at greater risk for ultraviolet rays in the winter than in the summer. And the glare from snow compounds the problem.”

According to Haque, ultraviolet light or UV rays have been linked to various eye problems such as cataracts, sunburn to the eyelids, pterygium (benign lesions found on either side of the cornea), skin cancer around the eyes and AMD, one of the leading causes of vision loss among older Americans.

“Inexpensive sunglasses are often labeled that they protect eyes from UV when they really do not,” Haque said. “Most will block harmful UVC and UVB rays but not the most damaging UVA rays. It is worth spending more to get full protection.”

For the ultimate in protection, skiers should wear wrap-around sunglasses or goggles with shatterproof lenses.

At the end of a day of skiing at arid mountain altitudes, where the air is very dry, it’s important for skiers to rehydrate their eyes, Haque said. Soothing artificial tear products such as GenTeal™ Drops from Novartis Ophthalmics can be used as often as needed.

Here are some more safety tips for skiing:



**For skiers, it’s important that any physical fitness regimen include protection for the eyes.**

- Equipment should be properly fitted. Boots should fit snugly; skis and poles need to be sized according to the skier’s height and ability. Skiers should consult a reputable ski shop for help when renting or purchasing equipment.
- Helmets and goggles should not obstruct the skier’s vision in any way.
- Clothing should be warm, windproof and waterproof so the skier does not become chilled. Skiers should dress in layers so clothing can be added or taken off as needed.
- Skiers should always have a partner. They should stay within sight of each other.
- Before setting off each day, skiers should warm up with a couple of slow ski runs.
- Skiers should keep to slopes that are appropriate for their skiing ability. Skiers should never venture into closed areas.
- Most skiing injuries occur in the afternoon, when skiers are likely to be tired. Skiers should know their limitations and rest or stop skiing to avoid injury.

To learn more, you can visit [www.novartisophthalmics.com/us](http://www.novartisophthalmics.com/us).