spotlight on health

Get The Most Out Of Sightseeing This Winter

by Rodney Tahran, O.D., F.A.A.O.

(NAPSA)—Whether you're heading to the slopes for some prime skiing or heading to the driveway to shovel snow, it's important to wear eyewear that is appropriate for your outdoor fun. So shoveling snow isn't all that fun? Neither is attempting to read a ski report while moving your glasses up and down or attempting to read a ski trail map by holding the map as far away from your eyes as you can.

Dr. Tahran

Sound familiar? By chance are you a "baby boomer"? If so, you probably suffer from presbyopia (pres-bee-OH-pee-uh), a condition that affects the eye's ability to focus on near and mid-distance objects. More than 100 million Americans, predominately those over 40, are affected by presbyopia. Signs of presbyopia include:

- eyestrain
- headaches
- eye fatigue
- blurred vision
- diminishing ability to maintain focus on near objects

Presbyopia is not a disease or a defect. It can be treated with proper diagnosis and corrective lenses. (Don't worry—you can still focus on buckling those ski boots without your vision becoming blurry!) The condition is easily treated with progressive lenses such as Varilux®, the most technologically advanced solution for presbyopia. Wearers can see near, far and in-between without those "aged" lines found in bifocals. To learn more, visit www.varilux.com.

Vision protection: On the slopes or on "The Hill"

Whether you're packing your snowboards and ski boots for a trip to Colorado or dragging a huge tire to take on "The Hill," remember to take along eyewear appropriate for your outdoor activities. The proper lenses can protect your eyes from two types of dangers—the damaging rays of the sun and physical injury.

Winter vacationers often overlook the importance of protecting their eyes from the sun's damaging rays. A frequent problem for skiers, snowmobilers and others who spend a lot of time in the intense reflected light of snow is corneal sunburn, or photokeratitis.

Often called "snow blindness," this condition causes eye pain, extreme sensitivity to light and the sensation of having sand in your eye. While the damage is not usually permanent, it can take a week for the cornea to heal. To protect your eyes from the bright sunlight and associated ultraviolet (UV) damage, it is important to wear tinted or polarized lenses that provide protection from ultraviolet light. Anti-reflective (AR) lenses like Crizal® sharpen visual performance and reduce the glare that can cause eye strain and fatigue.

Reflections on ordinary lenses can mean a loss of eight percent of visual acuity. Durable anti-reflective lenses like Crizal can recover more than 99 percent of visual transmission and your eyes feel more rested not having to fight off those reflections. As an added bonus, Crizal lenses allow those eyes to be seen better—without distracting reflections—making the wearer feel better about their appearance! To learn more, visit www.crizal.com.

Most of the eye injuries that occur during skiing, snowboarding and other outdoor winter activities happen because the sports enthusiast is wearing no eye protection at all. For those that are wearing proper eyewear, eyecare specialists should always prescribe polycarbonate lenses as an added precaution.

Glass and plastic lenses can shatter upon impact, posing danger to the eye. Polycarbonate lenses are the most impact-resistant. Today's high-grade polycarbonate technology has helped create lenses like Airwear™. Not only are they more durable, thinner and scratch-resistant, but they are available in a progressive addition lens designed for baby boomer wearers and can have the anti-reflective properties of Crizal added as well. To learn more, visit www.airwear.com.

To learn more about protecting your eyes while outdoors this winter or to locate an eyecare professional in your area, visit www.vision1to1.com or www.visionweb.com.

Dr. Rodney Tahran is vice president of professional relations and clinical affairs for Essilor of America, Inc., and serves as an adjunct professor at the Southern California College of Optometry. Dr. Tahran is co-chair of the Computer Vision Task Force of the Vision Council of America. He has served on the board of Prevent Blindness Florida, and is a member of the American Optometric Association, The Institute for Contact Lens Research and the Association for Research in Vision Ophthalmology.