

Protecting Eyes From Sun's Rays Is As Important As Protecting Your Skin

Experts Recommend UV Blocking Eyewear, Hats for all Ages

(NAPSA)—Most people know that exposure to the sun, especially at the height of summer, can damage their skin. But, extended exposure to the same harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays that affect skin can also increase the risk of developing sunlight-related eye disorders.

Experts say it is difficult to isolate the exact amount of damage that UV imposes on the eye over a long period of time. However, a number of studies have shown that the effects of UV radiation are cumulative and may increase the chance of developing eye problems later in life, including cataracts and age-related macular degeneration, two leading causes of reduced vision in the United States.

“Everyone, especially individuals who spend time in the sun for extended periods, is at risk for eye damage from the sun year-round,” says Dr. Stephen Cohen, a Scottsdale, Arizona-based optometrist and past president of the Arizona Optometric Association. “Taking steps to protect your eyes is as important as applying sunscreen to protect your skin.”

Ultraviolet radiation reaches the eye not only from the sky above but also by reflection from surfaces such as water, sand, pavement and snow, so sitting in the shade or under an umbrella by itself does not guarantee protection. The risk is greatest during the mid-day hours, from 10 AM to 3 PM, and during summer months. Ultraviolet radiation levels increase nearer the equator, so residents in the southern U.S. are



at greater risk. UV levels are also greater at high altitudes.

Protecting Your Eyes

The simplest and most effective way to protect against UV radiation is to stay out of the sun. However, since this is not always possible, protecting your eyes from the sun's rays can be achieved by simple, safe and inexpensive methods such as wearing a brimmed hat and using eyewear that absorbs UV radiation. “Ultraviolet absorbing eyewear, such as sunglasses combined with UV blocking contact lenses, provide the greatest measure of UV protection,” says Dr. Cohen.

All Acuvue Brand Contact Lenses offer effective UV-blocking, and Acuvue Advance Brand Contact Lenses with Hydraclear offer the highest level of UV-blocking available, with more than 90 percent of UV-A rays and 99 percent of UV-B rays blocked. On average, contact lenses without UV blocking block approximately 10 percent of UV-A radiation and 30 percent of UV-B radiation.

“Contact lenses with UV blockers are designed to complement sunglass use as added protection,” explains Dr. Cohen. Look for sunglasses that absorb at least 99-100 percent of both UV-B and UV-A rays. If you're not sure of the glasses' level of protection, ask your eye care professional to test them.

While sunglasses with UV blocking lenses can help shield eyes from UV rays in sunlight, they only block about 50 percent of UV radiation, because sunlight also enters the eye from above and around the sunglasses. “UV-blocking contact lenses effectively block sunlight that may enter the cornea from the side of the glasses, and wearing a broad brimmed hat provides protection for the rest of the eye and face as well,” says Dr. Cohen.

Acuvue Brand and Acuvue Advance Brand Contact Lenses with Hydraclear are indicated for daily wear vision correction. As with all contact lenses, eye problems, including corneal ulcers, can develop. Some wearers may experience mild irritation, itching or discomfort. Lenses should not be worn if the wearer has an eye infection or experiences eye discomfort, excessive tearing, vision changes, redness or other eye problems. If these conditions occur, the wearer should contact his or her eye care professional. Consult the patient information guide available from your doctor for complete information. For further information, talk to your eye care professional or call 1-800-843-2020 or visit www.acuvue.com.