



## A Message From Your Eye M.D.

### What You Need to Know About... UV Safety

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.

Ultraviolet radiation is composed of high-energy rays from the sun. Long-term exposure to ultraviolet radiation ("sunburn rays") may contribute to the development of various eye disorders, such as age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of vision loss among older Americans, and cataracts, a major cause of visual impairment and blindness around the world.

It is important to protect your eyes from acute damage caused even by single outings on very bright days. Intense, excessive exposure to ultraviolet light reflected off sand, snow or pavement can damage the eye's surface. Similar to sunburns, eye surface burns usually disappear within a couple of days, but may lead to further complications later in life.

Everyone is at risk for eye damage that can lead to vision loss from exposure to the sun. Any factor that increases your exposure to sunlight will increase your risk.

To ensure your eyes are protected, wear sunglasses and a broad-rimmed hat. When selecting sunglasses, make sure they block 99 to 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays. But 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.

Also, while out enjoying the sun in the water, remember to wear swimming goggles whenever and wherever you swim. Chlorine can make your eyes red and puffy, and ponds and lakes may have bacteria that can get underneath contact lenses and cause inflammation of the cornea.

So when you step out into the sun, remember to protect your eyes. If you experience any vision problems, see your Eye M.D.

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to find an Eye M.D., visit  
[www.aao.org](http://www.aao.org)

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**An Eye M.D.** is an ophthalmologist - a medical doctor who provides the full spectrum of eye and vision care. From eyeglasses and contact lenses to medication and surgery, your Eye M.D. will help you keep your sight for life.