



Eye Damage Due to Sunlight Safety Talk

While the sun is essential for all life on Earth it also causes several health hazards for us. The UV light the sun emits can cause sun burn, skin cancer, suppression of the immune system, and damage to the eyes. In this safety talk we will look at the dangers sunlight poses to our eyes and vision.

UV Light and Our Eyes

(source: AAO.org)

The sun emits UV light and this light can be harmful to our eyes. There are several different eye diseases caused by UV light.

- Cataracts. A cataract is a cloudiness of the natural lenses of your eyes.
- Growths on the eyes. There are two types of growth on the eyes. Pinguecula and pterygium are growths on your eye's conjunctiva, the clear covering over the white part of the eye. Pinguecula is a growth that looks like a yellow spot or bump. Pterygium is a growth of fleshy tissue that can get large enough that it covers your cornea affecting your vision.
- Snow blindness is a painful eye condition caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays reflected from ice and snow, particularly at high elevation. Symptoms include blurry vision, swelling, and watery eyes.
- Cancer called ocular melanoma can result in part or directly from exposure to UV light.

Best Practices to Avoid Sunlight Damage to the Eyes

- Avoid being out in excessively sunny conditions when possible, especially unprotected.
- Wear sunglasses that block 100% of UV rays. They should be marked if they do. Also the bigger the sunglasses the better for protecting your eyes.
- Wear a hat that blocks the sunlight from your eyes and face.
- Protect your eyes even on a cloudy day.

Summary

Our eyes are our portal to the world. Ensure you are protecting your eyes from the sun. Once you damage your vision you may never get it back.

Discussion point: Does anyone know of anyone who has damage to their eyes due to exposure to UV light?