

Parent Resources

Protect Your Child's Eyes From the Sun

Although parents go to great lengths to protect their children's skin from the harmful rays of the sun, many forget that the eyes need to be protected, too. Excess exposure to intense sunlight can burn the surface of the eye much like sunburn on the skin. Overexposure to sunlight can cause serious damage including sunburned corneas, cancer of the eyelid, cataracts and macular degeneration. Exposure to the sun could be setting up your child for potential vision problems later in life.

What You Can Do

How can you protect your child's eyes from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays produced by the sun? Sunglasses provide one of the best sources of UV protection. As a general rule of thumb, sunglasses should be worn if you are in enough sun to cause sunburn.

A child's eyes are more susceptible to UV exposure because the lenses in the eyes are clearer. With age, lenses darken and tend to block more UV light. UV light is strongest when reflected off of snow, sand, water or even pavement; these situations could produce a burn on the surface of the eye.

Protecting your child's eyes from the sun is simple

- Make sure your child wears a wide-brimmed hat that shades his/her face.
- Buy your child sunglasses that block UV rays. Make sure the sunglasses fit properly and are comfortable. Experts believe that sunglasses with 100 percent UV protection are the best defense to protect against harmful UV rays.

Over time, unprotected exposure to the sun can increase the risk of certain types of cataracts and potentially damage the retina, which could lead to total blindness. Do what you can to protect your child's eyes from the sun now so that his/her vision is not negatively impacted in the future.



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