

July is Eye Safety Month

July 4th fireworks, UV radiation from the sun, and outdoor activities all pose potential hazards to our only two eyes. Eye Safety focuses on reducing the risks for injury and blindness.

- Fireworks- Responsible adult supervision required! Avoid bottle-rockets, Roman candles, and other fireworks that fly. One of every three fireworks injuries is to the eyes.



- Protection from the sun with hats and sunglasses that block 99% of ultraviolet (UV) light and wrap around the sides.



- Baseball is responsible for more than 33% of all sports-related eye injuries. Protective goggles or unbreakable glasses are recommended to prevent injury.



- Home improvement projects can be blinding when nails, metal debris from a grinder, or wood chips from a saw bounce up or fly into the eye.



- Airborne grass, sand, or dirt can become foreign bodies in the eye resulting in corneal abrasions and damage. Household chemicals can also splash into the eye causing loss of sight.

Summer is a great time to enjoy the outdoors. “Eye protection is an essential part of summer fun and activities to prevent eye injury and damage to ones’ sight”, states Dr. Nathan Hamaker, Ophthalmologist.

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Eye Diseases

A **cataract** is a clouding of the eye's lens which may first be noticeable as a glare from oncoming headlights at night. A haze will surround the lights. Other people find it harder to read in poorly lighted areas. Letters may be harder to see or may blur together. The leading cause of cataracts is aging and other causes include:

- Sunlight
- Genetics
- Metabolic diseases like diabetes
- Some medications, including use of steroids

When cataracts adversely affect the activities of your daily life, it is time to consider surgery.

A **pterygium** is a growth on the eye's surface. It usually begins on the nasal side and slowly grows across the cornea to the center. Pterygiums are more common in people who do not wear sunglasses and who are outside receiving large amounts of UV radiation exposure.

UV exposure also contributes to macular damage and skin cancers. Risks of having these eye diseases increase in environments with high UV light. UV radiation can also be reflected by snow or water. Heat lamps and arc welders also cause an increase risk of eye damage from UV.

Nutrients Recommended To Protect Eyes

- Vitamin C helps protect watery portions of the cells
- Vitamin A and E block free radicals in cell membranes of eyes
- Zeaxanthin and Lutein reduces risk of macular degeneration, cataracts and dry eyes
- Fish Oils including DHA, docosahexanoic acid, repairs cell membranes and improves eye circulation
- A Multivitamin contains additional helpful trace elements

“Blessed are your eyes, for they see; ... And blessed are you because these things are come unto you, that you might understand them.”

Matthew 13:15

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