

EYE HEALTHCARE

A REALLY HOT SUMMER

Well this is what we all hope for, and whether or not a lot of direct sunshine comes, there will be plenty of harmful UV rays (even on cloudy or bright days), which can cause permanent damage to our eyes and skin.

Ultraviolet (UV) Radiation consists of invisible rays from the sun. The 3 bands of light are **UVA**, **UVB** and **UVC**. UVC rays are of little concern as they are absorbed by the earth's upper atmosphere (ozone layer).

UVB rays, however, burn the skin (which can cause skin cancer) and damage the eyes. Although a lot of UVB is absorbed by the ozone layer, prolonged exposure does induce cataracts (lens clouding) and photokeratitis (corneal burning).

UVA is not at all blocked by the earth's atmosphere, but thankfully is the least harmful to the human body, even though certain studies have shown links to cataract.

UV protection is particularly important for children, as they have larger pupils (letting more light in); this can account for 80% of all damage done in a lifetime before the age of 20, so avoid the cheaper 'toy' sunglasses.

Some glasses offer a polarized lens that eliminates glare from reflected light. Overall, it is so important to use sunglasses that are specifically aimed at eye protection from the UV rays – offering at least 98% absorption (not necessarily the expensive ones).

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