

\* \* \* **MEDIA ALERT** \* \* \*

**Summer's Almost Here! Help Protect Your Eyes  
from Harmful UV Rays**

*American Optometric Association offers tips  
for keeping your eyes healthy*

Most Americans understand the importance of protecting their skin from the sun but they seldom make an effort to protect their eyes. Many are unaware that exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation can harm the eyes and affect vision as well.

According to the American Optometric Association (AOA), even on an overcast day, harmful UV rays can cause sunburn of both the skin and the cornea of the eye. Over time, unprotected exposure to the sun can increase the possible risk of certain types of cataracts and potentially damage the retina, which could lead to total blindness. Americans should also know that UV damage is cumulative, so it's never too late to begin protecting the eyes from the sun's harmful rays.

The following **top five tips from the American Optometric Association** can help prevent further eye damage from exposure to UV radiation:

1. Wear protective eyewear any time your eyes are exposed to UV light, even on cloudy days and during winter months.
2. Look for quality sunglasses that offer good protection. Sunglasses should block out 99 to 100 percent of both UV-A and UV-B radiation and screen out 75 to 90 percent of visible light.
3. Check to make sure your sunglass lenses are perfectly matched in color and free of distortion and imperfection.
4. Purchase gray-colored lenses. They reduce light intensity without altering the color of objects, providing the most natural color vision.
5. Don't forget protection for children and teenagers. They typically spend more time in the sun than adults.

Additionally, be sure to receive routine comprehensive eye exams. It's a good way to monitor eye health, maintain good vision, and keep up to date on the latest in UV radiation protection.

For more information on UV protection, please visit: <http://www.aoa.org/x4735.xml>.

**About the American Optometric Association (AOA):**

The American Optometric Association represents more than 34,000 doctors of optometry, optometry students and paraoptometric assistants and technicians. Optometrists provide more than two-thirds of all primary eye care in the United States

and serve patients in nearly 6,500 communities across the country. In 3,500 of those communities they are the only eye doctors.

American Optometric Association doctors of optometry are highly qualified, trained doctors on the frontline of eye and vision care who examine, diagnose, treat and manage diseases and disorders of the eye. In addition to providing eye and vision care, optometrists play a major role in a patient's overall health and well-being by detecting systemic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.

Prior to optometry school, optometrists typically complete four years of undergraduate study, culminating in a bachelor's degree with extensive, required coursework in areas such as advanced health, science and mathematics. Optometry school consists of four years of post-graduate, doctoral study concentrating on both the eye and systemic health. In addition to their formal training, doctors of optometry must undergo annual continuing education to stay current on the latest standards of care. For more information, visit [www.aoa.org](http://www.aoa.org).

###