NATIONAL SUNGLASSES DAY
THE VISION COUNCIL

FACT SHEET

NATIONAL SUNGLASSES DAY:

Hosted by The Vision Council Foundation, National Sunglasses Day celebrates the importance of wearing sunglasses to protect the eyes from the sun's harsh ultraviolet (UV) rays on June 27 and all year long. The commemorative holiday was founded by The Vision Council, the leading trade association for the optical industry, in 2013.

WHY NATIONAL SUNGLASSES DAY MATTERS*:

UV radiation can have damaging long- and short-term impacts on vision and quality of life. Fortunately, wearing the proper eyewear can protect the eyes and lessen the impact of harmful radiation, all while ensuring that consumers can look and feel their best.

On National Sunglasses Day, celebrate your shades and help educate people everywhere about UV safety and how to stay protected while having fun in the sun.

Spending time in the sun without proper protection can have negative effects on overall health.

- Unprotected UV exposure can result in conditions including:
  - Inflammation of the cornea and conjunctiva – conditions easily prevented by protective eyewear
  - Cataracts – a clouding of the eye's normally clear lens, resulting in impaired vision
  - Pterygium – painful and irritating growth of fleshy tissue which can cover part of the cornea
  - Cancer in and around the eye – basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma
  - Macular degeneration – the leading cause of blindness in western countries

As a society, we're spending more time outdoors.

- Overexposure to sunlight is widely accepted as an underlying cause for harmful effects on the skin, eyes, and immune system.
- Experts say that four out of five cases of skin cancer could be prevented, as UV damage is mostly avoidable. Wearing protective gear, including sunglasses, and applying sunscreen to exposed parts of the body can help protect oneself from the sun.
- Sunglasses should be worn year-round to ensure protection from UV radiation, not just in sunny and warm conditions.

Some sun exposure is good for us – especially when experienced safely.

- A certain amount of UV exposure is beneficial to overall health, particularly for vitamin D.
- As little as 20 minutes a day spent outdoors helps reduce stress.
- Wearing sunglasses with 100 percent UVA/UVB protection reduces eye damage from sun exposure and enables individuals to more safely achieve the physical and mental health benefits you get from spending time outdoors.

Protecting vision from harmful UV rays and other damage is especially important during sports or other physical activities.

- About 30,000 sports-related eye injuries, serious enough to end in a visit to the emergency room, occur each year in the United States, and the majority happen to those under the age of 18.
- Almost 90% of eye injuries are preventable with proper eye protection.
- Studies show that protective eyewear does not hinder a player's sight. The right UV-protective eyewear can significantly enhance performance in sports and activities by optimizing vision clarity, depth perception, and contrast sensitivity.

THE FACTS ON UV RADIATION:

About UV radiation

Ultraviolet light is an invisible, electromagnetic radiation emitted by the sun.

The sun emits three kinds of UV radiation: UVA, UVB and UVC. While UVC is absorbed by the Earth's atmosphere, UVA and UVB radiation can burn the skin and eyes and cause damage to vision health. Wearing sunglasses protects your eyes from harmful UV rays.

Risks associated with UV exposure

UV exposure is often recognized as the culprit for sunburns and skin cancer, but it also has damaging impacts on vision.

Effects of UV damage include:

- Swollen or red eyes
- Hypersensitivity to light
- Cataracts
- Age-regulated macular degeneration
- Photokeratitis, resulting in vision loss
- Cancer of the eye or eyelid

People most at risk

Children and adolescents are especially vulnerable due to their skin and eye structure. They also generally receive three times as much annual sun exposure than adults because many of their activities are outdoor-based, including school recess, sports and playtime.

It is vital for children to have proper eye protection as their eyes cannot filter UV light as effectively as adults', resulting in a larger amount of UV radiation that can reach and damage the retina.

Fair-skinned people are more susceptible to sunburns and have a high risk of skin cancer; however, darker-skinned people also develop skin cancers. Consideration of eye damage and proper UV protection is important for everyone.

Other people with increased risk include people with light colored eyes, those with a high number of birthmarks and moles on their body, those taking photosensitizing medicine, those with a family history of skin cancer, and outdoor workers.

How to protect yourself and your loved ones from UV radiation

Sunglasses continue to be the most effective tool for preventing immediate and long-term UV eye damage. The right pair of sunglasses will block UVA and UVB light – as indicated by a sticker or label on the glasses verifying UV protection. Learn more about different sunglass options **here**.

UV radiation throughout the year

The sun emits UV rays all year long. It's important to wear sunglasses any time you're outside, regardless of the weather or the season. Sunglasses are a daily health necessity to protect the eyes from long- and short-term damage from the sun's UV rays.

HOW WE'RE CELEBRATING:

Celebrate your Shades on June 27

In the spirit of warmer weather, more outdoor time, and showcasing one's personal style, The Vision Council Foundation is excited to celebrate National Sunglasses Day on June 27 by spotlighting sunglasses and eyewear that provide UV protection for long-term eye health, and help prevent serious eye conditions like cataracts and macular degeneration.

Gear up, shades on

The Vision Council encourages people everywhere to participate in National Sunglasses Day by posting on social media channels using the official hashtag **#NationalSunglassesDay** and tagging @TheVisionCouncil on Facebook and Instagram and @OpticalIndustry on X. Follow The Vision Council on Instagram and Facebook @thevisioncouncil for details.

GET INVOLVED:

You can learn more about National Sunglasses Day and download a toolkit of promotional resources here.

**Sources:*
The Vision Council inSights Research

World Health Organization

- *https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/radiation-sun-protection*
- *https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ultraviolet-radiation*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- *https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/sun-safety.htm*