Eye Damage Due to Sunlight Stats and Facts

FACTS

Cataracts – Research has linked UVB light directly to the development of cataracts, which occurs when the crystalline lens of the eye becomes gradually cloudy and opaque, potentially resulting in total blindness if not treated.

Macular Degeneration – The macula is located at the center of the ocular membrane called the retina and is responsible for clear, detailed vision. Over time and with exposure to UV light rays, the natural lens of the eye filters out the vast majority of damaging ultraviolet light before it has a chance to damage the retina and macula.

Pterygium – Also known as **surfer's eye,** pterygium occurs when the protective membrane of the outside of the eye called the conjunctiva becomes inflamed and grows out toward the optical center of the eye. It is typically associated with prolonged exposure to sunlight, especially when reflected off the surface of water or snow.

Keratitis – Excessive exposure to harmful UV rays from the sun and tanning beds can actually cause the cornea to burn, not unlike a sunburn. The cornea is used to refract light within the eye and directs light to the retina.

Skin Cancers of the Eyelid – As with the rest of the body, the eyelids are vulnerable to the harsh effects of UV radiation and can not only be burned by overexposure, but can also develop varying degrees of skin cancer, including basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma.

STATS

- Americans place comfort (65 percent) and affordability (54

percent) before UV protection (44 percent) when purchasing sunglasses.

- Parents are more likely to wear shades always or often (56 percent) than their children (29 percent).
- Many adults who rarely or never wear sunglasses (25 percent) report that they skip UV eye protection because they don’t own prescription sunglasses (41 percent).
- Millennials are least likely to protect their vision: 55 percent of people in their 20s never, rarely or only sometimes wear sunglasses.
- Americans’ only use sunglasses when they are outside for two or more hours (39 percent).
- Americans are leaving their eyes exposed: only 14 percent are likely to wear sunglasses while watching outdoor sporting events and only 44 percent are likely to wear sunglasses at the beach.