



# NORTHERN MINNESOTA EYE CARE

## ASK THE OPTOMETRIST

### How Does UV Affect The Eyes?

Most people are aware of the harm UV radiation can do to the skin, but many may not realize that exposure to UV radiation can harm the eyes or that other components of solar radiation can also affect vision.

There are three types of UV radiation: UV-C is absorbed by the ozone layer and does not present any threat; UV-A and UV-B radiation can have adverse long- and short-term effects on the eyes and vision.

If your eyes are exposed to excessive amounts of UV radiation over a short period of time, you are likely to experience an effect called photokeratitis.

Like a "sunburn of the eye", photokeratitis may be painful and include symptoms such as red eyes, a gritty feeling in the eyes, extreme sensitivity to light and excessive tearing. Fortunately, this is usually temporary and rarely causes permanent damage to the eyes.

Long-term exposure to UV radiation, however, can be more serious. Exposure to small amounts of UV radiation over a period of many years increases the chance of developing a cataract and may cause damage to the retina, a nerve-rich lining of the eye that is used for seeing.

The longer the eyes are exposed to solar radiation, the greater the risk of developing cataracts or macular degeneration. The American Optometric Association recommends wearing quality sunglasses that offer UV protection and wearing a hat or cap with a wide brim whenever you spend time outdoors.

Don't forget protection for children and teenagers. They typically spend more time in the sun than adults.

Make an appointment with an optometrist today at Northern Minnesota Eye Care for a comprehensive eye examination. It is a good way to monitor your eye health, maintain good vision and keep track of your solar radiation protection needs as well as new advances in eye protection.

**Appointments available Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 9:00 - 4:00  
Thursday from 9:00 - 6:00**

*Walk-ins also available. Most insurances are accepted.*

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