

# Can Your Eyes Get Sunburned?

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**A:** We're constantly reminded to protect our skin from the sun's damaging rays and glare, so when summer heats up, what do we do? We reach for the sunscreen. What many of us don't realize is that our eyes are also vulnerable to becoming sunburned.

Long hours in the sun expose unprotected eyes to dangerous UVA and UVB rays and can actually cause sunburned eyes. If you've spent several hours in the sun and your eyes are watering, itchy, sensitive to light, or dry and gritty, it's likely you have sunburned eyes. Sunburned eyes aren't just irritating. According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, repeated exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation and near-UV light can contribute to cataracts and macular degeneration.

It's easy to prevent sunburned eyes. A wide-brimmed hat will help shade your eyes, but don't stop there. Every member of your family should wear sunglasses outdoors, even in cold winter months. Ask your eye doctor for sunglasses with 100% UVA and UVB protection and HEV, near-UV or blue-light filtering. Think about frame size too—larger frames help prevent harmful rays from sneaking in at the sides or top of your glasses.

Take a few simple precautions to protect your eyes from burning. You'll have fun in the sun and enjoy good vision for many summers to come!

If you suspect your eyes are seriously sunburned, don't take any chances. Visit your VSP eye doctor right away.