

## Sun Safety for Young Eyes

*Summertime overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays is a well-known danger for your skin. Did you know that the same UV-A and UV-B rays that can cause skin damage can also harm your eyes? Children's eyes are especially vulnerable.*

According to the American Optometric Association, children are at a greater risk of UV damage because the lenses of their eyes are more transparent, allowing more short-wavelength light to reach the retina.

Children also tend to spend more time outside than adults, which increases exposure. Try to keep your children out of the sun between 10:00AM and 2:00PM when the sun's UV rays are the strongest.

All children, including babies, need UV protection for both their skin and eyes whenever they are out in the sun, regardless of the time of year and even on cloudy days. Sunlight reflected off water, snow and pavement can be especially dangerous because it is intensified.

Extensive or intense exposure to UV rays can cause "sunburn" on the surface of your eye. Similar to sunburn on your skin, eye surface burns usually disappear within a couple of days but may lead to further complications down the line.

**UV damage to the eyes is cumulative, meaning it builds over time. Since up to 80 percent of a person's lifetime exposure to UV is received before the age of 18, the damage that young eyes are subjected to in childhood can lead to serious problems like cataracts and macular degeneration later in life.**

*According to the World Health Organization*

[Prevent Blindness America](#), the oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization in the U.S., offers the following guidelines for protecting your children's eyes from sun damage:

- **Only purchase sunglasses that block out at least 99% of both UV-A and UV-B radiation.**
- **Make sure the sunglasses fit the child's face and shield the eyes from all angles.**
- **Choose lenses that are impact resistant and made of polycarbonate, never glass, unless prescribed by a doctor.**
- **Make sure lenses are not scratched or damaged.**
- **Purchase wraparound sunglasses to protect eyes as well as the delicate skin around the eyes.**
- **Add a wide-brimmed hat or cap for even better protection.**

Shop wisely. No matter how cute or how much the sunglasses may appear to shade the eyes, those without UV protection will actually cause the pupils to dilate, which allows in even more harmful rays. Sunglasses that provide the right amount UV-A and UV-B protection come in all price ranges. Check them out at [Baby Product Experts store](#) near you.



**Baby Product Experts specialty stores provide safe, high-quality products and expert advice. Be sure to consult a store near you when planning a nursery for your new baby.**