

# Patient Focus

June 2012

## Don't Let the Sunshine In!

The Fifth Dimension may have urged us to “let the sunshine in”, but the American Academy of Ophthalmology advises us to “keep the sunshine out”, of our eyes that is. Prolonged and excessive exposure to the



ultraviolet (UV) rays emitted by the sun can actually burn the surface of your eyes and lead to the development of sight-threatening eye conditions, such as cataracts, later in life.

To ensure your eyes are protected at any time of year, wear sunglasses and broad-brimmed hats. When selecting your sunglasses, make sure they block 99 to 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays.

If you're enjoying the summer sunshine by the water, remember to wear swimming goggles whenever you swim. Consider purchasing goggles or sunglasses that wrap around your temples because they block the sun's rays from entering on the sides. In addition to protection from UV ray exposure, goggles will also minimize the effects of chlorinated water and keep

the bacteria in lakes and ponds from causing eye infections.

UV light sources such as welding lamps or tanning lights can also be harmful to your eyes so be sure to wear

protective eyewear when you're exposed to these invisible UV ray sources.

The capability of sunglasses to block UV light is not dependent on the darkness of the lens or the price tag. **The opticians in our Optical Shop at the Penn State Hershey Eye Center** will be happy to assist you in selecting sunglasses which will protect your eyes as well as flatter your face. They can also assist you in selecting swimming goggles and other protective eyewear for use during outdoor sports activities. It is important to choose properly fitted sunglasses for your children too. The lenses should be impact resistant and should not pop out of the frames. **Our Optical Shop is open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.**

*Sources: American Academy of Ophthalmology and [www.Preventblindness.org](http://www.Preventblindness.org)*

## Allergens and Our Eyes



Spring showers and Summer sunlight have created lovely green grass and floral landscapes but these can create problems for those with allergies to the blooming vegetation. The eyes produce a substance called histamine to fight off the allergen which results in reddened

eyes which may be watery and itch, burn, and/or sting. Over the counter remedies such as artificial tears and decongestants may relieve these symptoms but, if the problem persists, contact your eye care doctor who can help determine if there are other reasons for the irritation you are experiencing.

Eye allergies, called *allergic conjunctivitis*, are not spread from person to person.

Source: [www.geteyesmart.org](http://www.geteyesmart.org)

### Did you know . . .

Birds' retinas, in contrast to those of humans, contain no blood vessels and this prevents shadows and light scattering. Their retinas also have three types of photoreceptors (humans have only two) which may allow them to perceive ultraviolet or near-ultraviolet light. However, most birds have little or no binocular vision like we do since their eyes lie at the sides of their heads. This makes judging distances difficult.



Source: [www.backyardnature.net](http://www.backyardnature.net)

## What's happening in Eye Care Research?

The Penn State Hershey Eye Center is conducting several clinical trials. If you'd like to volunteer to participate, read more about them at:

<http://www.pennstatehershey.org/web/cto/home/current/ophthalmology>



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