



Protect your eyes from the sun

Why wear sun protection for our eyes?

We are all aware that we should use sunscreen to protect our skin from Ultra violet (UV) light damage, but did you know that your eyes are ten times more sensitive to UV light than your skin?

What damage can UV rays do to my eyes?

Repeated exposure to UV radiation can damage the central part of the retina and contribute to the development of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), one of the leading cause of sight loss in the UK. Long-term exposure to UV can also lead to cataracts – a clouding of the lens. Repeated over exposure can also increase your risk of cancer of the eyelid and the skin surrounding the eye. Remember children's eyes are more sensitive than adults and protection is especially important for them.

What can I do to protect my eyes?

Sunglasses are also an excellent way of protecting your eyes from UV light. However a simple dark tint is not enough. Since the pupil opens wider behind a dark lens, you could put your eyes at risk by letting in more damaging UV if the lens does not block UV. For full protection prescription sunglasses should meet UV400 standard – check with your Optician that yours do. Non-prescription sunglasses should carry a CE Mark or the British Standard BS EN 1836:2005 to ensure they provide adequate UV protection. It is sensible to wearing a wide brimmed hat and to stay out of the sun between 12 noon and 3pm – when the sun's rays are strongest.

What lens options are available?

Sunglass lenses are fall into four categories – this number is often found marked after the CE mark on non-prescription sunglasses.

- 0 - a light filter for low light protection
- 1 und 2 - a medium filter for use in Europe
- 3 - a dark filter for tropical zones, mountains or on water
- 4 - a very dark filter for extreme radiation conditions, e.g. on a glacier

What about light reacting lenses?

Photochromic lenses offer UV protection and darken in the sun to provide comfort from glare and are a good all-round lens for everyday use. However, many wearers find they do not darken fully when driving and prefer to use dark prescription sunglasses in certain conditions.

What about polarising lenses?

Polarising lenses offer UV protection and also stop reflected glare from wet roads, snow and water – excellent for drivers, fishermen and sailors.

Which colour lens is best?

Grey and green are the most popular lens tints for general purpose use. Colour perception is true, with reds remaining red, blues blue and greens green.

Brown - effective for filtering scattered blue light commonly found in hazy, foggy or low light conditions. Colour perception is altered with some colours enhanced and some subdued. Brown tints can improve contrast and depth perception in variable light conditions and are popular for skiing, sailing, driving and general use.

What frames are suitable?

Plastic and metal styles are suitable but usually a larger lens size is best to stop light creeping around the edge of the frame. Wrap-around styles are useful to cut out glare and UV from the side and modern lens manufacture allows these frames to be glazed with prescription lenses. Ask your Optician which frame is best for you.

How much will this cost?

At this time of year most Opticians have promotions on prescription sunglasses which offer full UV protection as well as a choice of frames and tint colours. At Coleman Opticians we have single vision prescription sunglasses from £35 complete which are free as a second pair if you buy spectacles from our £100 (lens inclusive range) or above.

Remember – when you need to wear sunscreen for your skin you need to wear sunglasses for your eyes.

