

Why you
should be
wearing
sunglasses

FUTURE'S SO BRIGHT

They're not just a great fashion accessory.

Sunglasses protect your eyes from ultraviolet rays that can damage your vision. Ultraviolet rays can harm your eyelids, cornea, lenses and retinas, and can take a toll on your vision.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology says ultraviolet radiation can raise your risk of eye diseases and other problems. These include some conditions that can take years to develop, including eye cancers.

It's important to remember that while UV rays come from the sun, they can also come from artificial light sources. Any sunglasses

you purchase should offer a hundred percent UV protection.

It's also helpful if your sunglasses are a wraparound style for maximum protection.

Wearing sunglasses is good for your skin, too. The skin around the eye is some of the most thin on your body, and UV rays can be strong enough to punch through that thin skin — which is also more susceptible to damage because of its thinness — and manage to damage your eyes even though they're closed.

Sunglasses aren't just for the summertime.

"Whether it's winter

or summer, cloudy or sunny, you're always subject to ultraviolet exposure," Dr. Elliot Levine told Piedmont Healthcare.

It's especially true if you're hanging out near the water or snow.

"Not only do you

get direct sun exposure, but you also get reflected light from the water," Dr. Levine said.

You should also wear sunglasses even if it's cloudy; harmful UV rays can pass through haze and thin clouds, too.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology says you should wear sunglasses in the early afternoon, when the sun

is strongest; at higher altitudes where the UV light is more intense; and when you're taking medications that can cause sensitivity to light. These include some antibiotics, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and diuretics.

Sunglasses are also recommended for kids, said Dr. Dawn Davis, a dermatologist at the Mayo Clinic.

"We suggest sunglasses on children as early as possible," she said.

When choosing sunglasses, Dr. Davis said, you should pick a pair — whether for adults or children — that has broad spectrum coverage or specifically protects against UVA and UVB rays.

**"You're
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health
Mind, Body & Soul

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SUNGLASSES:	
Vital protection	2
TAKE GYM ACTION:	
Visit a trainer	3
DENTAL TECH:	
New gadgets	4
SWIM TIME:	
Family activity	6
DIABETES & EYES:	
Know the dangers	8
DIET CONTROL:	
Tips for health	10
HYPERTENSION:	
Cause and effect	11
BLOOD PRESSURE:	
Vital control	12
DEPRESSION:	
You can help	14

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