

Protect your eyes in the sun.

Just as UV (ultra violet) light causes premature ageing in our skin, it also causes premature ageing in our eyes. Research suggests that the harmful UVA and UVB rays contained in sunlight may be a factor in a number of eye diseases, and in particular cataracts (RNIB).



Protecting your eyes from sun damage.

Using a UV filter can stop the majority of harmful rays from entering the eye.

- Prescription glasses – most now have a built in UV filter, but check this with your optometrist
- Contact lenses – some, but not all, brands have UV protection, so you should check this with your optometrist
- Sunglasses - While sunglasses are definitely a good idea when it comes to eye protection, not all sunglasses are created equal. The Association of Optometrists recommend that glasses that sit closer to the eye and wrap around, blocking out more light, are usually better. They've issued three steps for protecting eyes against sun damage:
 1. Wear CE marked sunglasses, even if you're using contact lenses with a UV filter
 2. Add extra protection with a wide brimmed sun hat
 3. Never look at the sun directly, even if it's just for a few seconds

Reflective surfaces.

UV exposure is higher where there are reflective surfaces, for example near water. A day at the beach without proper eye protection can cause a temporary but painful burn to the surface of the eye, similar to sunburn. So protecting your eyes when at the beach, fishing and boating is a good idea. Snow intensifies the amount of reflected UV light, so skiers and snowboarders should take particular care.

Protecting your children's eyes in the sun.

Infants and children lack pigment in the lens of the eye, which helps filter UV rays. So more UV rays will reach the retina of a child than an adult.

You can protect your child's eyes in the sun with sunglasses that meet the British Standard and carry the CE mark (check the label) - fake sunglasses will usually provide little or no protection from the sun. It can help to choose sunglasses with an elastic band for very young children, and make sure they wear a floppy hat with a wide brim that shades their face. Babies can be protected by hats, stroller hoods and sun parasols.



Our eyes are ten times more sensitive to UV light than our skin and our children's eyes are at the greatest risk of UV damage.

Eyecare Trust