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May is Declared Ultraviolet (UV) Awareness Month by Prevent Blindness to Educate Public on Harmful UV Effects on Eyes

National Non-profit Group Provides Free Information on Best Ways to Protect Vision from the Sun

CHICAGO (April 30, 2018) – [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation's oldest eye health and safety organization, has declared May as Ultraviolet (UV) Awareness Month to help educate the public on the dangers that UV exposure may have on vision. UV damage may cause immediate effects, such as a corneal sunburn (photokeratitis). Long hours on the water, for example, without proper eye protection can cause this problem.

UV damage has been linked to the development of macular degeneration, cataract, pterygium (a growth on the white part of the eye) and cancer. According to the [World Health Organization](#), different forms of eye cancer may be associated with life-long exposure to the sun. Melanoma is the most frequent malignant cancer of the eyeball, and a common location for basal cell carcinoma is on the eyelids.

Adults and children are at risk from UV damage. However, the risk of sun related eye problems is higher for people who:

- spend long hours in the sun
- have certain retina disorders
- had cataract surgery (although some artificial lenses do absorb some UV rays)
- are on certain medicines, such as tetracycline, sulfa drugs, birth control pills, diuretics and tranquilizers that increase the eye's sensitivity to light.

When purchasing sunglasses, Prevent Blindness recommends consumers always read labels carefully and only buy sunglasses that clearly state that they block 99 to 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays. Sunglasses should be worn in conjunction with a brimmed hat. Wrap-around sunglasses are best.

For those participating in outdoor sports activities, Prevent Blindness recommends consulting with an eye care professional on eye protection that both blocks UV as well as protects eyes from injury.

“Consistently wearing effective UV eye protection is a habit that we should practice year-round, not just in the warm-weather months. By wearing UV-blocking sunglasses and a visor, we can help protect our vision today and for years to come,” said Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness.

For more information on the dangers of UV exposure and how to choose the best UV protection, please visit the Prevent Blindness dedicated Web page at <http://www.preventblindness.org/protect-your-eyes-sun> or call (800) 331-2020.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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