



**BETTER
HEALTH**
INFO BITE



**Life Care
Consultants Ltd**
Ngā Kaitohutohu Tiaki Ora



Beyond skin deep

People working outdoors, or anyone who enjoys spending time in the fresh air, nature, and the sunshine, should by now know about wearing sunscreen, sure, you might not actually slather yourself in it, for whatever crazy reason!

But you will have at least heard about the necessity and long-term benefits of wearing sunscreen. Have you ever heard it mentioned that eye care in the sun is just as important? We're not so confident really, as it seems the skin gets all the attention.

The eyes however are just as sensitive to the risk of damage by UV rays, and we find that in particular, people working outdoors, will have an increased risk of eye damage because of sun exposure, although surprisingly, this is yet to be fully studied, researched, and confirmed – how much risk, is yet to be determined.

If you're working outdoors and have PPE assigned to you, this should include sunglasses and there are options available to protect workers from both flying objects and UV exposure.

Here are some PCBU guidelines and resources available on the topic:



WorkSafe Guidelines - Sun and UV Exposure



Are My Sunglasses PPE?
UF/IFAS Pesticide Information (ufl.edu)

Skin checks aside, as much as 5 – 10% skin cancers diagnosed annually, are in and around the eye area; "UV radiation, whether from natural sunlight or indoor artificial rays, can damage the eye's surface tissues as well as the cornea and lens," says ophthalmologist Michael Kutryb, MD, a spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. "Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the dangers UV light can pose. By wearing UV-blocking sunglasses, you can enjoy the outdoors safely while lowering your risk for potentially blinding eye diseases and tumours." *The Sun, UV Light and Your Eyes - American Academy of Ophthalmology (aao.org)*

With the Kiwi summer heading our way and UV rays more potent in our neck of the woods (this is because of altitude), we encourage you and your whanau to remember this short checklist before heading out the doors to our great outdoors!

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No matter the season:

- *Wear a broad-brimmed hat, these are best. If that's not your "look", then wear a cap at least!*
- *Wear UV-approved sunglasses (not all sunglasses protect from UV rays, be sure to look for a sticker or label, and if this isn't displayed, ask a sales consultant. All sunglasses sold in New Zealand should ideally be tested and labelled according to the Australian/New Zealand standard AS/NZS 1067:2003, although this is still voluntary in New Zealand. Under these standards, sunglasses with a value of 3 and 4 absorb almost all UV radiation. Sunglasses should also be comfortable and not distort or discolour your vision.*
- *Protect children and senior citizens with hats and sunglasses. Everyone is at risk for sun damage.*
- *Know that clouds don't block UV light. The sun's rays can pass through haze and clouds.*
- *Sunlight is strongest midday to early afternoon, at higher altitudes and when reflected off water, ice, or snow.*
- *UV radiation exposure is strongest in the early morning or late afternoons, because of the angle of the sun in relation to the eyes.*
- *Never look directly at the sun. Doing so at any time, including during an eclipse, can damage the eye's retina and cause a serious injury known as solar retinopathy.*
- *Avoid tanning beds. Tanning beds pose the same risks to your eyes and body as outdoor UV light.*
- *We suggest keeping the accessories, hat, sunnies and sunscreen, readily available at the entrance you use to your home!*



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