



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUNGLASSES: FRIEND OR FAUX?

Protect Your Eyes from UV Rays This Summer

(Honolulu, Hawaii), June 1, 2011 – We have all found that amazing pair of sunglasses at a gas station, farmers market, or novelty store, but is that pair of sunglasses actually providing you good protection from the sun? Here are a few pointers that will help you find a good pair of sunglasses that will protect you from short and long-term damage from UV rays. The American Academy of Ophthalmology has designated June as UV Safety Month. Sunglasses are your friend as they are the best defense against the sun for your eyes.

The sun emits three forms of UV radiation: UVA, UVB, and UVC. The two critical types of UV rays are: UVA and UVB as they cause the most damage. UVC rays are absorbed by the ozone layer and do not pose a threat to the eyes. Just as the skin can burn, the surface of the eye can also experience sunburn. This occurs with prolonged exposure to the sun without any protection. The eye may become bloodshot and irritated. This can cause surface tissue, cornea and lens damage. Without proper protection from the sun, over time you may experience conditions such as Pterygium, cataract, or macular degeneration. “The number one way to protect your eyes from sun damage is by wearing sunglasses,” shares Dr. Christopher Tortora, Medical Director of the Hawaiian Eye Center in Wahiawa. “It is important to remember that sun bounces off of many different surfaces allowing sunlight to enter the eye from any direction. Wearing a hat helps to reduce the amount of light that can enter the eye.”

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When picking a pair of sunglasses there are a few tips that will help you pick out the best pair to suit your lifestyle, incorporating both function and fashion. Ensure that everyone, young and old is wearing protective sunglasses while outside at anytime of the day, as everyone is susceptible to damage from the sun. Most importantly, sunglasses should be rated as providing 100% UV protection, blocking 100% of UVA and UVB rays. A type of sunglasses referred to as “wraparound” will provide the most coverage from the sun, as they wrap around the temples, covering the most eye area. These days, there are also a number of different lens colors available. The color of lens does not contribute to the protection against the UV rays, however can affect comfort. The lens color also contributes to the way you see other colors. A grey color lens will show the truest colors. A pink lens makes colors look more intense. You will also find a number of different coatings that are applied to the lens that provide additional protection. Polarization is more commonly found now, from standard to designer brands. Many boaters and outdoorsmen find polarization to be helpful as it reduces glare from horizontal rays of light. If you have light sensitive eyes, polarization may provide you with added comfort.

The most UV light is generated between 10:00am and 3:00pm when the sun is at it strongest. Even on cloudy days, there are still many UV rays that pass through the clouds and haze, so don't be fooled, wear your sunglasses. UV protection should not only be considered during the summer months, it should be of concern all year round.

“The artificial UV light used in indoor tanning salons, can be even more damaging to your eyes than sunlight,” explains Dr. Christopher Tortora. So whether indoor tanning, outdoor tanning, or just having fun outdoors, wear protective (UV blocking) eyewear and add a hat for extra protection.

Dr. Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of “The Hawaiian Eye Show,” a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision. He and his colleagues at Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call the Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8488 where *“life has never looked better.”*

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