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# Share the Wellness Tip

## Knock Yourself Out With Some Cheap Sunglasses

As the heat is on this summer, so are the sun's harmful UV rays. And it's not just about using sunscreen. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas invites you to share these tips with your employees for choosing the best protection for eyes.

Sunglasses don't have to be expensive to protect your eyes. Good ones can often be found at a local drugstore. Wear contacts? Contact lenses alone may not protect your eyes from ultraviolet (UV) light that can cause cataracts. Everyone including lens wearers should wear sunglasses with at least 99% ultraviolet protection.

Sunglasses offer important protection from the sun's damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays. Long-term exposure to UV rays can damage the eye's surface, as well as its internal structures, sometimes contributing to cataracts (clouding of the lens) and macular degeneration (breakdown of the macula).

Consider these helpful tips from the Glaucoma Research Foundation when selecting sunglasses:

### **Look for UV Protection**

The ability to block UV light is not dependent on the darkness of the lens or the price tag. While both plastic and glass lenses absorb some UV light, UV absorption is improved by adding certain chemicals to the lens material during manufacturing or by applying special lens coating. Always choose sunglasses that are labeled as blocking 99 to 100 percent of UV rays.

### **Make Sure Lenses Block Enough Light**

Sunglasses should screen out 75 to 90 percent of visible light. To determine if a pair is dark enough, try the glasses on in front of a mirror. If you can see your eyes easily through the lenses, they are probably too light.

And sunglasses aren't just for summer. Sunglasses are also needed in winter sports and activities, especially at high altitudes and are useful if you are taking medications that can cause photosensitivity,

*Sources: Glaucoma.org, American Academy of Ophthalmology*

