

Children's Eye Health and Safety

As a new parent and an Optometrist, the subject of children's eye health and safety is near and dear to my heart. My wife and I were blessed with identical twin girls this past October. Protecting the eyes from the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation over a lifetime is one of the best things we can do for our eyes. UV radiation can contribute to the formation of cataracts and macular degeneration slowly over time. When buying sunglasses look for lenses that are at least 99% protective against UV-A and UV-B. Polarization is another option to reduce glare or reflected light. According to the American Optometric Association website, "the lenses in sunglasses should be made from polycarbonate or Trivex® material if you participate in potentially eye-hazardous work or sports. These lenses provide the most impact resistance." As school is starting back, it is time to be thinking about the back to school eye exam as preparation for a successful new school year. The recommendation for children is to have an eye exam at ages one, three, and five, or more often if any vision or eye health problems are suspected. Very often we see children with Amblyopia or poor vision related to lack of proper stimulus or use of the eyes. This can be related to an eye turn or due to lack of use. This can be treated and improved in many cases if the problem is caught early by a screening or eye health exam. However, the earlier vision problems are detected in children the better the chances we have of improving the vision and depth perception. I usually suggest school age children have their eyes checked yearly as the eyes can change quickly during this time as they are growing.

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