

Eye Health: Which sunglasses are best for people with diabetes?

The right type of sunglasses can offer more than just a little shade, they help protect your eyes from ultraviolet (UV) light damage from the sun. This is especially important for people with diabetes because you're already at risk for eye complications.

UV Light & Your Eyes

There are three categories of UV light:

- UVA
- UVB
- UVC

UV light can damage your skin—increasing your risk of skin cancer—but it's important to protect your eyes from UV light, too. This is because regular UV light exposure can:

- Lead to diabetes-related macular edema or make it worse
- Lead to cataracts
- Lead to eye cancers
- Increase the likelihood of developing eye diseases

Even if you don't have any eye problems now, you can help protect your eyes further from UV light by avoiding exposure and wearing sunglasses.

Use the Right Sunglasses to Protect Your Eyes

You can find affordable sunglasses that will protect your eyes from UV light at stores or at your eye doctor's office.

To be sure your eyes are protected from UV rays, look for a sticker or wording that says:

- 100% protection against UVA & UVB
- UV Protection
- UV 400 Protection (the "400" refers to the full wavelength of UV light)

If you wear prescription glasses or sunglasses, talk to your eye doctor about their UV protection and if there are options to improve their protection.

Note that some sunglasses are labeled as "polarized," but it's important to know that polarization isn't the same as UV protection. Polarization allows you to see better from the glare that comes from water, snow, and other reflective surfaces. If you want to buy polarized sunglasses, be sure that they also have the sticker/wording above for UV protection.

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