

CBS17 News

Smart shades for summer rays

July 5, 2010, Smart shades for summer rays: When it comes to sunglasses, finding the right protection for your eyes should be top priority. CBS 19's Amanda Roberson has more on what you should look for in your shades this summer.

Doctors say looking for a pair of glasses with 99 percent to 100 percent UV protection is the most important factor people should consider when buying a pair of glasses, but eye protection doesn't stop there.

Alana Plahetka never goes anywhere without her sunglasses. "My eyes are very light and really sensitive," Plahetka explained. "So every time I step outside, I have to put them on."

Just like your skin, the sun can damage and age your eyes. Overexposure can lead to cataracts and macular degeneration, which cloud and blur vision.

If you don't wear your sunglasses, you will develop all these problems at an earlier rate and at a younger age," said Dr. Mark Fromer from Lenox Hill Hospital.

Not keeping your eyes covered can also cause skin cancer in and around the eyelids. Experts point out you don't have to skimp on style, just make sure your glasses block the harmful UV rays. "You want 100% ultraviolet protection for both UVA light and UVB light," Dr. Fromer added.

Darker lenses do not mean you're wearing the best weapon against the sun. They can actually dilate your pupils and cause more damage. Stick with amber and light charcoal grays. Also try wearing close fitting or wrap around frames.

Plahetka looks for protection when she chooses her sunglasses. "You only have one set of eyes, so you have to be careful and take care of them."

Just because your shades cost more doesn't mean they'll deliver what you need, so your eyes could end up paying the price.

Polarized lenses are another option. They help reduce glare from water and non-metallic surfaces and even though polarized lenses are a higher quality, shoppers can still find them for an affordable price.

Also, don't forget about the kids. 80 percent of a person's exposure to UV occurs before the age of 18.