



The sunny summer weather is still with us and will be for a few months longer. Some states in the southeast enjoy more warm weather year round than others, but the common thread is we all get lots of sunshine. With that sunshine comes the possibility of some health related issues. The one I want to talk about in this bulletin is the sun and the effect it can have on your eyes.

We all know that we do not stand in formations in CAP wearing sunglasses. But when we are out in the field on a ground team exercise or in the air as an aircrew member, it might be a good idea to wear sunglasses. In fact it is a good idea to wear sunglasses year round.

Here are a few facts for you to consider. An international health organization reports that as many as 900,000 people worldwide go blind because of cataracts triggered by excessive UV ray exposure. Macular Degeneration is also a problem some develop. MD causes the eyesight to become blurred and eventually you can suffer a loss of vision. Research indicates that 10% of skin cancers occur around the eyes because the skin of the eyelids and around the eyes is some of the thinnest on your body. A temporary eye problem is Photokeratitis. This is essentially a sunburn of the eye. It is quite painful and has the sensation of sand being in your eyes.

Physicians tell us it is a good idea to protect our eyes. Sunglasses are a valuable tool in doing just that. As my eye doctor use to tell me, "Take care of your eyes. You only get one set per customer."

If you fly a lot, non-polarized shades will help, plus non-polarized lenses make some instrument readouts easier to see. Small frames are o.k., but bigger gives you more protection. Plastic lenses lead to distortion when looking side to side. So, if you are in the market for sun shades, look for a label or tag that indicates 99-100% UV absorption.

If you have any questions about the health of your eyes make sure to contact your eye health professional and if you already wear glasses or contacts, make sure you stay up to date with your eye appointments.

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