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Tanning Beds

Tanning beds produce high levels of ultra-violet (UV) light that tan the skin and burn the cornea, the clear covering of the eye. The burn is not felt until 6-12 hours after exposure, so you can suffer a severe burn without realizing it. UV light may also cause cataracts, and be a factor in the development of macular degeneration.

Of course, an ounce of protection is worth a pound of cure, so always use protective eyewear while using a tanning bed. Closing your eyes, wearing regular sunglasses, and using cotton pads on your eyelids does not protect your cornea from the intensity of the UV radiation in tanning devices.

Tanning facilities are required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to provide goggles, but it is best to obtain your own pair so you will always be prepared. Make sure your goggles fit snugly and cover your eyes properly. If you borrow the salon's goggles, be sure they are sterilized after each use to prevent infection.

Since you do not usually burn under tanning devices, most people do not realize the potential damage to their eyes. If you experience eye pain after UV exposure, contact your ophthalmologist.

Skin cancer is directly associated with UV damage to the skin. Avoidance of tanning beds is recommended to decrease the risk of skin cancer.