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How the summer sun can harm your eyes



The health of your eyes is no laughing matter.

Courtesy photo

BY JAMI SHELTON

Did you know your skin isn't the only area of your body that can be damaged by the sun? Your eyes can, too, and ultraviolet exposure can cause damage to your retina and even the lens, leading to diseases such as macular degeneration and cataracts.

Dr. Heath Bullard, one of the five therapeutic optometrists at Cleburne Eye Center, said it's important to have the right eye protection to protect your eyes from being exposed.

"When people are exposed to intense ultraviolet rays from the sun hitting the eyes over many years, they can develop cataracts — one of the leading causes of vision loss around the world," Bullard said. "But the good news is ... sunglasses can block 99 to 100 percent of these harmful UV rays, if you buy the right pair."

But, Bullard said, that's not all. "Repeated sun exposure to the eyes can also increase the risk of macular degeneration, a disease where the sharp central vision of the retina is decreased, leading to difficulty in reading or driving. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss and blindness in Americans over 65."

Bullard said UV can also cause a pinguecula or pterygium, which is a yellowy, fleshy discoloration and a slightly-raised thickening on the white part of the eye.

"The eyes are very sensitive to sunlight. Taking care to protect them now will prevent lots of problems later."

Bullard said Cleburne Eye Clinic has an extensive selection of sunglass frames for the casual sunglass wearer or those who work outdoors and require more

safety and protection, like those in the oil and gas or construction industries. And, optical manager Kelly Tuttle says Cleburne Eye Clinic is one of the only optometrists in the county to carry ophthalmic Oakleys.

For women, Cleburne Eye Clinic has sunglasses from Versace, Gucci, Dior, Coach,

Cole Haan, Calvin Klein, Juicy Couture, Adidas, Valentino, and Kate Spade.

Also, summer's a great time to get the kids and returning college students in for their annual vision exam.

"It's also a great time to get Lasik vision correction surgery done. Then when you go to the lake or the beach, you won't have to worry about getting sand in your contacts or not being able to see when you're swimming without your glasses."

So whether you need glasses, contacts, Lasik, a thorough eye exam, or diagnosis and

management of an eye disease, trust the people who know vision — the place voted "Best Vision Center" in Johnson County 2009, 2010 and 2011 in the Cleburne Times-Review.

They've been helping people in Cleburne and surrounding areas for over 60 years.

Call today for an appointment and use your plan's benefit before it expires. Cleburne Eye Clinic is on almost every vision plan and most medical plans, and they can usually get patients an appointment within a week. Call 817-645-2411 for an appointment or go to www.cleburneeyeclinic.com.

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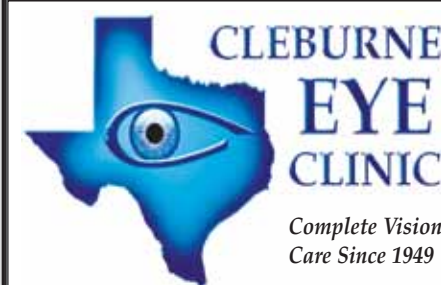
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