



## ASK THE OPTOMETRIST

**ASK THE OPTOMETRIST** IS A SERIES OF INFORMATION NEWSLETTERS THAT WE ARE PLEASED TO PROVIDE OUR PATIENTS TO ELABORATE ON A VARIETY OF RELEVANT EYECARE TOPICS.

### **SUNGLASSES**

#### **Q1: WHY DO I NEED TO WEAR SUNGLASSES?**

FOR THE SAME REASON THAT YOU NEED TO WEAR SUNSCREEN – THE SUN’S ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION DAMAGES TISSUE, CAUSING AT BEST SUNBURN AND DRY EYE, AT WORST MELANOMA AND AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION. A QUALITY UV-BLOCKING LENS NEEDN’T BE EXPENSIVE, BUT IS ESSENTIAL FOR ANYONE SPENDING ANY AMOUNT OF TIME OUTDOORS, WHETHER WINTER OR SUMMER, BRIGHT OR OVERCAST.

#### **Q2: WHAT SORT OF SUNGLASSES SHOULD I WEAR?**

CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, THE ACTUAL TINT (COLOR) OF THE LENS IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS THE MATERIAL OR COATING, WHICH ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR UV BLOCKING. IT IS CRITICAL THAT ALL UV-A AND UV-B RAYS ARE PREVENTED FROM REACHING THE OCULAR SURFACE – LOOK FOR YOUR LENS TO HAVE CSA OR ANSI APPROVAL TO INDICATE THAT IT PROVIDES FULL UV PROTECTION. WRAP-AROUND FRAME STYLES ARE BENEFICIAL IN PREVENTING UV FROM REACHING THE EYE AROUND THE FRAME, AND, WHEN AUGMENTED BY A BRIMMED HAT, CAN PROVIDE EXCELLENT PROTECTION AND VISUAL COMFORT.

#### **Q3: ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE TINT DOESN’T MATTER?**

IN TERMS OF UV PROTECTION, SINCE ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION IS ‘INVISIBLE LIGHT’, IT’S NOT AFFECTED BY ANY ‘VISIBLE TINT’. THAT BEING SAID, THE TINT ON THE LENS IS IMPORTANT FOR BRIGHTNESS AND GLARE REDUCTION – GRAY TINTS ESSENTIALLY BLOCK ALL LIGHT EQUALLY, WHILE BROWNISH LENSES PREFERENTIALLY BLOCK GREENS, AND AMBER (‘BLUE-BLOCKERS’) IMPROVE CONTRAST BY REDUCING SCATTER. POLARIZED LENSES BLOCK REFLECTED LIGHT FROM FLAT SURFACES, INCLUDING SNOW AND WATER, MAKING THEM IDEAL FOR SKIERS AND BOATERS. IN SHORT, TINTS ARE SELECTED MAINLY BASED UPON PATIENT PREFERENCE, WHILE COATINGS AND MATERIALS ARE SELECTED FOR PROTECTION.

#### **Q4: HOW MUCH SHOULD A GOOD PAIR OF SUNGLASSES COST?**

WITH SUNGLASS PRICES RANGING FROM LESS THAN \$10 TO AS MUCH AS \$500, THIS IS A GOOD QUESTION. REMEMBER THAT HIGHER PRICES DO NOT ALWAYS INDICATE BETTER QUALITY – AS WITH MANY PRODUCTS, DESIGNER LABELS OFTEN CARRY DESIGNER PRICING. PROVIDING THAT THE FRAME IS DURABLE AND COMFORTABLE, AND THE LENS AFFORDS 100% UV PROTECTION WHILE MINIMIZING DISTORTION, AN INEXPENSIVE PAIR OF SUNGLASSES MAY BE MORE THAN ADEQUATE. MORE EXPENSIVE SUNGLASSES, HOWEVER, MAY INCORPORATE ANTI-REFLECTION COATINGS, PHOTOCHROMIC LENSES, AND/OR POLARIZATION, AND BE WORTH THE ADDED EXPENSE. OUR PRACTICE SELECTION INCLUDES MAUI JIM, BOLLE, COACH, HUGO BOSS, AND OTHERS, IN STYLES AND AT PRICE POINTS TO ACCOMMODATE EVERYONE.