

Can *YOU* See the Kid on the Bike?

Dr. Mark Kimpel, an Indiana University research doctor and ophthalmologist, says he really doesn't care for the photo you see here, as it doesn't accurately show what night vision loss is really like. He describes night vision loss this way: "When you're driving at night, you'll still see the yellow stripe on the road. What you won't see is the kid on the bike."

Did you realize there is no drug or surgery to restore night vision once you've lost it?

How do we lose our night vision? Many indoor tanners are worried about tan lines around their eyes, so they skip eye protection altogether, instead of slightly adjusting their goggles during the tanning session to minimize tan lines. Some folks recommend switching eye protection types – changing goggle brands and using disposable eyewear every other session – to blend any tan lines that develop. Some tanners tell me they remove their eyewear for the last few minutes of their tanning time; I'm not advocating this idea as I don't think it's worth the risk; but it's better to be protected for 17 minutes than not at all.

Outdoor sun exposure also causes night vision loss. Many folks skip wearing sunglasses in the bright sun while at the beach, working in the yard or playing sports. The strength of UV radiation is increased near reflective surfaces such as water, pavement (ball courts) or snow. That's why skiers wear UV block reflective goggles – to protect their eyes from the UV and the glare. You'll want to make sure your sunglasses are labeled "UV 400" or "UVA/UVB Block." Even many expensive sunglasses are just a tint and don't protect your eyes from damaging UV rays.

Remember, night vision loss cannot be recovered! So, wear your eye protection while you relax in that nice, warm tanning bed. And, share this article with your tanners ... so they, too, will see "the kid on the bike" for many years to come. ■



Did you realize that UV overexposure – from both tanning indoors without eye protection and outdoor exposure without sunglasses – is the main cause of night vision loss?

Did you realize that it's not unusual for teens who tan indoors without eye protection to already have substantial night vision loss?

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Tanning industry veteran Brenda Fishbaugh is president of Eye Pro, Inc., makers of disposable eyewear. She travels extensively training salons on the effects of UV light on vision.

