

Eye Damage... Could this be YOU?



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.

In the October issue of *Island Sun Times*, we asked salons to share any incidences of eye damage caused by indoor tanning, so that other salons could learn from their experiences.

Of 59 entries received, we chose 10 winners. The First Place winner is Diana McEnroe, of Finishing Touch Day Spa in Waterloo, IA. Compliments of Solarmeter, Diana will enjoy a UV meter (\$159 value) to measure the UV output of the nine tanning systems in her salon. Regular metering of sunlamps is a great way to save on lamp replacement costs, as well as ensure that you always offer your customers high-functioning lamps. Our 2nd-10th Place winners will each receive a box of WINK-EASE disposable eye protection, and FRESH-EASE after-tan body cloths (a \$50 salon value, each.) Their entries, as well as other salon operator experiences with eye damage, will appear in future columns.



Here is Diana McEnroe's experience with improper eye protection while tanning indoors:

"Back in 1982, I was living in Holladay, UT. While shopping at the mall one day, someone standing outside a beauty supply store offered me a free tanning session. I had never heard of indoor tanning and decided to give it a try. I loved it! It was so relaxing and saved me time. The salon operator didn't educate me about the tanning process, didn't have me

fill out a release form of any kind, and put me in a sunbed for the maximum time of 30 minutes. Luckily, it was toward the end of summer and I had a pretty good base tan; but unfortunately, I wasn't given any kind of eye protection and was unaware of the importance of wearing it while tanning.

I did enjoy the tanning session and purchased a one-month unlimited package. After three and a half weeks of daily tanning, I found my eyes really itched after my session. That night, I woke in the middle of the night and my eyes would not stop tearing, and I was in terrible pain. My boyfriend took me to the emergency room where the staff put numbing drops in my eyes, applied patches and told me to keep them covered for several days. They were itchy and burning and tearing a lot, and I couldn't do anything with my eyes patched closed! The doctor told me that the UV light from the sunbed had severely burned my unprotected eyes. This very common condition is called a corneal burn, photokeratitis or "snow blindness."

Once my eyes got better, I went to the tanning salon and asked why they did not suggest protective eyewear to me. The salon manager told me she did not know indoor tanning could damage the eyes, and thought tanning goggles were unnecessary. To her credit, the salon manager did learn from my horrible experience, and soon brought in goggles to sell to customers.

I never, ever tan without eye protection! Now that I have my own salon, I check every single customer and explain the value of eye protection by showing him or her the horrid eye damage pictured on the educational counter-mat we have. My tanners now know why it is important to wear clean eye protection during every session and that a painful accident like mine can be prevented!"

Thank you, Diana, for sharing your experience with our readers. Readers, if you would like a free educational counter-mat like Diana uses, please email Brenda@eyepro.net and reference Diana. ■