

TEST YOUR “EYE-Q”

BEGINNER'S VERSION



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.

How would you answer these basic eye protection questions?

1. *Do I need to remove my contact lenses before my tanning session?*

If you wear contacts while you tan, they may dry out, causing itching and irritation. The drying is a result of the dry heat and air from the fans in tanning units. You can easily prevent your contacts from drying out by using eye drops before and after your session.

If you're one of those stubborn tanners who won't wear FDA compliant eye protection, consider removing your contacts before tanning. The burn your unprotected corneas will receive is substantially increased because the contact lens blocks air circulation necessary for healing.

2. *Can I wear sunglasses during my tanning session?*

Sunglasses aren't meant for indoor tanning. First of all, they're made to block UV and the bigger lenses create the "raccoon eyes" we try to avoid. Secondly, everyday sunglasses are not form fitting like products designed for indoor tanning, so a lot of ambient light can get around the lenses and damage your eyes.

3. *I close my eyes during my tanning session, so I don't need eye protection, right?*

Wrong. Your eyelids block less than 25 percent of UV light, so closed eyes are not protecting your vision from the powerful lamps that are designed to tan you quickly in a sunbed or booth.

FDA compliant eye protection – such as the goggles and disposable eyewear you sell in your salon – are designed to protect your eyes from UV while minimizing tan lines. You'll also find that FDA compliant eyewear is see-thru (even those mirrored goggles and disposable eyewear "stickers" are see-thru – try them and be surprised!) so that you can see to get out of the tanning unit in an emergency, adjust the controls, or check the session timer.

4. *How can I avoid getting "raccoon eyes" from eyewear?*

To avoid getting tan lines from eye protection, the first thing to do is start with a clean face. Nearly EVERY cosmetic product contains SPF to keep you from tanning! So, if you wear moisturizer, foundation, concealer and eye shadow, you've effectively put four layers of SPF on your eyelids – they will not tan!

You should offer your clients several eye protection styles, so they can find the one that will best minimize tan lines. The most common goggle style is one piece, with a high nose-bridge arch that prevents tan lines on the nose. Some styles have two separate lenses and no nose-bridge; these are fine for use in a sunbed, but a one-piece style with an elastic headband is needed for stand-up tanning. Some new goggle styles have a removable nose-bridge, so you can use them in any tanning unit. Disposable eyewear is also an FDA compliant and very versatile option.

5. *After I tanned, my vision was hazy and my eyes watered. Why?*

You may have been experiencing photokeratitis, a common problem for tanners who don't wear eye protection. The scratchy feeling in your eye wasn't sand – it was your cornea peeling! Unlike your skin, your eyeball contains no melanin and can be damaged by exposure to UV light. Photokeratitis, or "snow blindness" is the most common reason for E.R. visits by indoor tanners. Protect your eyes by wearing FDA compliant eye protection every time you tan!

Salon owners, look for more eye protection info in the next issue & feel free to share it with your tanners, as long as you credit the source. *Thanks!* ■

Look for a tougher quiz in our next issue!

*Have a question you'd like answered?
Email Brenda@EyePro.net and see your
question in a future issue of IST!*