



[ Eye to Eye ]

by Brenda Fishbaugh

# Test Your “Eye-Q” **Advanced 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 difficult eye protection questions? We asked easier questions in the last issue...feel free to check them out at [islandsuntimes.com](http://islandsuntimes.com) & share them with your tanners!

## *I cover my face with a towel when I tan, so I don't need eye protection, right?*

No. A towel or t-shirt offers an SPF of 5 or 6 – it's not blocking the UV light from your face and is not protecting your eyes. If you don't want to expose your face to any UV, you need to use a product with SPF 20, and wear FDA compliant eye protection. Here's a good rule of thumb: if water can penetrate it, so can UV. Cotton balls, towels and t-shirts do not adequately block the damaging UV rays. They may keep you from getting a tan, but they don't protect your face or eyes from overexposure.

## *A salon operator suggested I wear sunglasses outside. Why are sunglasses important?*

UV light exposure – from tanning lamps or from the sun – can damage your eyes and is considered to be the cause of night vision loss and color perception loss. There are no drugs or surgeries that will restore night vision or color perception (the ability to differentiate between similar colors, such as three shades of blue).

Cataracts are also caused by overexposure to UV, whether from a tanning system or natural sunlight.

Ophthalmologists see a host of damage to the eye from UV overexposure, particularly in people who work outside and don't wear sunglasses, such as construction workers, fishermen, lifeguards and farmers.

## *My eye protection is very light-colored and I can see through it. Is it protecting my eyes?*

Yes. If your eyewear packaging indicates that it meets “Federal requirements for eyewear 21 CFR 1040.20,” you will be completely protected while you tan. The ability of eyewear to block UV has nothing to do with the shaded lenses. Dark-colored lenses block visible light and just make it more comfortable to relax or sleep under the bright lights of a tanning bed.

## *My contact lenses have UV-block. If I wear them in the sunbed, do I need to wear eye protection, too?*

Yes! You DO need to wear FDA compliant eyewear every time you tan indoors.

This is for an important reason: contact lenses with UV-protection are a wonderful thing, but they only cover a small

portion of your eyeball. The whites of your eyes and the delicate skin around your eyes are unprotected and can be damaged by the strong UV rays.

## *Should I protect my eyes in a UV-free booth?*

The Food and Drug Administration has recommended that eye protection be worn when receiving UV-free spray. It's not a law; it's up to the salon to set the policy. Disposable eyewear is especially nice for this application, as there are no strings to leave lines on the side of the face; disposable eyewear can just be thrown away after the session.

## *I own my own goggles. Do I need to clean them?*

Yes! The most important detail of owning goggles is to keep them in a clean place when you aren't wearing them – a Ziploc bag is a great idea. Many tanners carry their goggles in their gym bag next to gym shoes and sweaty clothes, which is an incubator for bacteria. Some women carry goggles in their purse, where they pick up all sorts of dirt and makeup, which is also very unsanitary. If you wouldn't throw your unprotected toothbrush on the floor of your car or in the glove box, why would you carry your goggles that way?

Anti-bacterial soap is good for cleaning your goggles; rinse and dry them thoroughly and store them in a clean place, such as re-sealable bag. DON'T microwave, boil or put your goggles in the dishwasher; the plastic is not made to withstand that kind of heat.

## *If I open my eyes while wearing my eyewear in the tanning unit, am I hurting my eyes?*

Absolutely not. If you wear FDA compliant eyewear, your eyes are protected from damaging UV light. Feel free to open your eyes to adjust the fans, etc. If your eyewear fits properly, your vision is protected. (Your eyelids block less than 25% of damaging rays; closing them when you're NOT wearing eyewear is not good enough!) ■

## *Salon owners, you are free to share this information with your tanners, as long as you credit the source. Thanks!*

Have a question you'd like answered? Email [Brenda@EyePro.net](mailto:Brenda@EyePro.net) & see your question in a future issue of IST!