



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.



## ● Can you re-use disposable eye protection?

..... by Brenda Fishbaugh

*This is an often-asked question that I thought I'd share with you.*

Dear Brenda,

With the tough economy, we have customers who buy a single pair of disposables and show them to our staff each time they come in, to save on buying a new pair of disposables on each visit. How can we stop this practice? Another problem is that some customers wear their disposables over and over. Won't bacteria grow from re-using disposables? Thanks!

*Margaret Green, Manager  
Ultimate Exposure – Gold Coast Location  
Chicago, IL*

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Dear Margaret,

Thanks for writing! I appreciate your interest in ensuring your customers are properly protecting their eyes.

Yes, some tanners will show salon staff the same pair of disposable eye protection over and over to avoid having to buy a pair of goggles, and they aren't actually wearing anything on their eyes when they tan! There are a number of ways to prevent this.

When selling a pair of disposable eye protection, some salons write the date with marker on the back side of the disposables. Very sweetly say, "These expire today, and you'll need to buy or bring a fresh pair for your next tan. And please don't keep them in your wallet, as that is VERY unsanitary. A Ziploc bag is the only safe place to store a medical device that will be used on a mucus membrane such as your eye! With all the flu going around, you really don't want your disposable eyewear to pick up germs from the money in your wallet!"

Some salons prevent customers from bringing in the same unused disposables over and over by folding the stickers for their customers. When the tanner buys a pair, the salon staff simply folds the eye protection into the proper cone shape, then places them on the towel or paper backing to minimize handling.

This is a great service for your customer, as they won't get lotion all over their stickers while trying to fold them. And it works nicely for you, as they can't readily unfold and make them look "unused." Just remember to have your staff use hand sanitizer before folding the disposables. I always recommend leaving a bottle of hand sanitizer on the counter for use by customers and staff, alike.

I've also created a letter you can share with your tanners, which explains that disposables are licensed as a one-time use Class One Medical Product by the FDA and can only be used once. Class One Medical Products include tongue depressors and cotton balls. You wouldn't want your doctor re-using the tongue depressor from your last check-up, would you? If your tanner wants to argue that the mouth and eye are different, they actually aren't; both are mucus membranes – and the FDA letter proves that.

I do recommend you educate your tanners about why eye protection is so important, so they will want to wear their goggles or disposable eye protection. One easy way is to use an educational counter mat that features "gory" photos of eye damage. A picture is worth a thousand words, right? The laminated counter mat not only shows eye damage from UV overexposure, but also photos of what can result from wearing dirty goggles or re-used disposables.

Education of your staff is key – they need the proper tools to instruct your tanners about why clean eye protection is critical. Most salon operator certification programs have a great eye protection section, so you may want to re-certify your staff online. Another option is to check out the free 30-minute eye protection training at [eyeopro.net](http://eyeopro.net).

If you'd like a complementary counter mat for your salon, as well as the FDA "One Time Use" letter, email your salon address to [Brenda@EyePro.net](mailto:Brenda@EyePro.net) and I'll send your materials free of charge. (Please mention this *Island Sun Times* column in your request.) ■

