

FIVE MYTHS ABOUT SUNGLASSES



Myth #1) "Sunglasses are really just for looks."

That, of course, is not true. Bright sunlight can damage the cornea, the lens, and the retina of the eye. And while squinting and the natural constriction of the eye's pupil do a lot to filter out sunlight, good sunglasses can do a lot more.

Myth #2) "All sunglasses are essentially the same."

Actually, some glasses offer little added protection. Make sure any pair of sunglasses you buy screens out at least 80 percent of the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays—the label should state the level of protection. The best glasses screen out 95 percent.

Myth #3) "If the sunglasses are expensive, they must be good."

Price and protection are not necessarily related. Don't assume anything; read the label.

Myth #4) "Lens color isn't important to safety."

Yellow or blue-colored lenses may make a fashion statement, but they distort colors and are not good choices for driving. Also, if you can still easily see your eyes in a mirror, the lenses probably aren't giving you much protection from ultraviolet light.

Myth #5) "Lens material and type don't matter."

That depends on what you're doing. The Food and Drug Administration requires all sunglasses to be "impact resistant," but that doesn't mean glass lenses won't shatter. For sports and active work, go with plastic lenses. In addition, polarized lenses are a plus around water and snow because they reduce reflection and glare. Gradient lenses are good for driving because they are darker at the top and lighter at the bottom, giving you a better look at the road ahead.

