

Snow Blindness Fact Sheet

Snow blindness is the common name for photokeratitis, which is a burn to the cornea from over exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light. Snow is highly reflective and can reflect up to 80% incident UV radiation. It is important to prevent this condition, as you could permanently affect your vision.

SYMPTOMS

- Feeling of grit in eyes
- Increased tear production
- Uncontrolled twitching of eyelids
- Redness
- Pain
- Distorted vision (halos, blurriness)
- Light sensitivity
- Swelling
- Temporary loss of vision

PREVENTION

- ❖ Use of sunglasses or goggles rated for 99-100% UV absorption. They should be wraparound or side shielded with large lenses that fit close to the face.
- ❖ Make sure you have appropriate eye protection, even on overcast days.

FIRST AID TREATMENT

- ❖ If you experience this, remove yourself from exposure by going into a darkened room or tent.
- ❖ Remove contact lenses until your eyes return to normal.
- ❖ Apply a cool compress to your eyes. Manage pain with over-the-counter medication.
- ❖ This condition may take a few days to heal.
- ❖ If pain or vision distortion continues more than a few days after exposure, seek medical attention.

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

American Academy of Ophthalmology [Photokeratitis](#)

World Health Organization [The known health effects of UV](#)