

Eyemart Express Doctor Shares Eye Safety Tips for Total Solar Eclipse

Plus, what to do if you think you may have damaged your eyes

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The upcoming total solar eclipse is expected to be visible across most of the United States, which will not happen again until 2045. Thus, many Americans are making plans to view the phenomenon on April 8. That is why [Dr. Carrie Huntington](#), an optometrist at [Eyemart Express](#), the exclusive eye care partner of the VFW, has compiled a list of how to safely view the eclipse.

“Wearing normal sunglasses or looking directly at the sky without proper eyewear during an eclipse can cause permanent damage to your retina,” says Dr. Huntington. “Our goal is for everyone to safely experience this event.”

Dr. Huntington’s top tips to enjoy the total eclipse include:

- 1. Do not reuse old glasses from a previous eclipse.** It is best to throw away eclipse glasses that are more than three years old to ensure your eyes remain protected during this year’s viewing. Older glasses may not meet current safety requirements or materials can degrade over time. Glasses that are scratched or bent can also put your eyes at risk.
- 2. Get a pair of eclipse glasses or solar viewers.** These glasses will be much darker than typical sunglasses since they are made to block ultraviolet light and infrared radiation. The most important element when shopping for effective protective eyewear is to ensure it meets the requirements of the ISO 12312-2 international standard. A list of vendors with eclipse glasses approved by the American Astronomical Society can be found [here](#).
- 3. Avoid looking directly at the eclipse through a camera lens, telescope, or binoculars, even if you are wearing eclipse glasses.** Lenses on those devices require a separate solar filter. Without the proper gear, doing so could result in serious

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damage to the eyes.

If you are unable to get eclipse glasses or solar viewers, you can still watch the total eclipse using pinhole projection. A few simple ways to improvise viewing the solar eclipse include using your hands, poking a hole in a piece of paper, or digging through your kitchen for a colander or anything with holes. The America Astronomical Society illustrates how to follow the pinhole projection method [here](#).

Following the eclipse, potential symptoms of eye damage include reduced, blurred, or distorted vision, including seeing spots or waves. It is important to see an eye doctor immediately for an exam and possible treatment. Make an appointment with an eye doctor at Eyemart Express stores nationwide [here](#).

All VFW members receive an exclusive 20% discount on all glasses and sunglasses at Eyemart Express stores with a valid VFW member card. Login at [vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org) and visit Member Benefits from the My VFW page for more information or to find an Eyemart Express location near you.