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Top Five Ways to Sunblock Your Eyes This Summer **How to Make Healthy Sunglass Choices**

NEW YORK (July 2013) —Overexposure to the sun not only wreaks havoc on your skin but can also damage your eyes. Sun damage can cause severe conditions such as sunburn to the cornea, tissue growth on the surface of eyes that can block vision, and cancer of the eyelids and inner eye, and may even contribute to the development of cataracts and other eye problems.

Dr. George Cioffi, chief of ophthalmology at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center says, “Although everyone should protect their eyes from overexposure to harmful UV rays, there are some groups that are at higher risk. People with retinal disorders, people with light-colored eyes, cataract surgery patients, and those taking medications that increase eye sensitivity to light should take extra steps to protect their eyes from the sun in the summer and all year-round.”

Dr. Christopher Starr, director of refractive surgery at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, adds, “There are strong indications that chronic exposure to the sun may accelerate aging of eye tissue. All protective eyewear should have a side shield protection or wrap around the eye so light cannot enter the eye from side reflections.”

Drs. Cioffi and Starr offer a five-point checklist to help you choose the best sun protection for your eyes during the summer and all year-round:

- **Check the UV protection level.** UV and sunglass protection is recommended year-round, especially during daylight hours. Even on cloudy days the UV index can be dangerously high. Your sunglasses should provide more than 95 percent

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UV protection and ideally 100 percent (sometimes labeled as UV400 on the glasses).

- **Check the lens tint.** Most people believe that darker sunglasses provide better protection against the sun, but that is not true. The lens tint should block 80 percent of transmissible light but no more than 90 percent to 92 percent of light; neutral gray, amber, brown or green are good colors to choose from.
- **Make sure your sunglasses block the light from all angles.** Choose sunglasses that wrap all the way around the temples, and/or wear a hat with at least a three-inch brim that can block the sunlight from overhead.
- **Wear shades over your contact lenses.** People who wear contact lenses that offer UV protection should still wear sunglasses. Sunglasses are helpful for preventing the drying effect most contact lens wearers get, which is caused by wind.
- **Buy shades for your children.** Children's eyes are not able to block UV rays as well as adults' eyes. For the best protection, consider UV-protected sunglasses for your children, and remember small infants should always be shaded from direct exposure to the sun.

NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital

NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, based in New York City, is the nation's largest not-for-profit, non-sectarian hospital, with 2,353 beds. The Hospital has nearly 2 million inpatient and outpatient visits in a year, including more than 220,000 visits to its emergency departments — more than any other area hospital. NewYork-Presbyterian provides state-of-the-art inpatient, ambulatory and preventive care in all areas of medicine at five major centers: NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center, NewYork-Presbyterian/Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital, NewYork-Presbyterian/The Allen Hospital and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Westchester Division. One of the most comprehensive health care institutions in the world, the Hospital is committed to excellence in patient care, research, education and community service. NewYork-Presbyterian is the #1 hospital in the New York metropolitan area and is consistently ranked among the best academic medical institutions in the nation, according to U.S.News & World Report. The Hospital has academic affiliations with two of the nation's leading medical colleges: Weill Cornell Medical College and Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. For more information, visit www.nyp.org.

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