

# Health & Fitness

## Sun's rays can damage eyes as well as skin

Aaaaah! The summer is almost here. Long lazy days, warm breezes, trips to the beach and the fragrant scent of sunscreen signal the changing of the season. But medical experts warn the sun's hot glow could leave you with more than a few tan lines. You already know the damage the sun can have on your skin, but did you know it can also change the way you see the world?

When you pack the SPF for your trip outdoors, don't forget your sunglasses! According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology (A.A.O.) wearing shades in the sun can protect the long-term health of your eyes. In fact, results from several studies over the past 10 years indicate that spending long hours in the sun without adequate eye protection increases your chance of developing eye disease.

The A.A.O. states that in 1988 a group of ophthalmologists studied 838 Chesapeake Bay fishermen who had spent years working on the water. The fishermen who wore no eye protection had three times as many cataracts (clouding of the eye's lens) as those who wore sunglasses or a brimmed hat. Research has linked the cataracts to exposure to ultraviolet radiation in sunlight. Some experts predict damage to the ozone layer may be allowing more UV light to reach the earth, which could result in a slight

increase in the number of cataracts that are formed each year.

The eye-opening research has prompted ophthalmologists to spread the word about the sun's dangerous stare. "We now encourage our patients to wear UV-absorbent sunglasses and a brimmed hat whenever they're in sun long enough to get a suntan or sunburn," says Dr. Donald Savage, of Savage, Sharkey & Reiser Eye Care Consultants in Kingston, "especially if they live at higher elevations". Other eye conditions linked to overexposure to sunlight include pterygium, a growth that invades the cornea, and pingueculum, a yellowish patch or bump on the white of the eye.

So how do you know which kinds of sunglasses offer the best protection from the sun? Doctors recommend you look for lenses that block 99% or 100% of the UV rays. Wraparound or close-fitting glasses reportedly offer the maximum protection from the sun. When it comes to lens color, experts suggest that you select the shade that distorts your vision as little as possible...usually dark grey or dark green tints work best.

So get out and enjoy the warm weather, but don't forget that what you do to protect yourself now, could affect the way you live later!

## Stroke damage can be limited with care

Former President Richard Nixon died as a result of the same disease which kills 150,000 American annually—stroke. Although the number of stroke deaths in the country is declining, stroke is the third leading killer of Americans today. One-third of the estimated three million stroke victims are wage earners between the ages of 35 and 65.

"A stroke is a form of cardiovascular disease affecting the arteries or veins of the central nervous system. It interrupts the flow of blood which supplies oxygen and nutrients to the brains," says Marsha M. Neumyer, instructor of vascular surgery and technical director of the Vascular Diagnostic Library at Penn State's Milton S.

Hershey Medical Center. "It causes death of some brain cells, which may result in paralysis or impairment in sensation, speech or vision, which may be permanent," says Neumyer.

But modern stroke care can often prevent long-term disability. It is important for people to learn the warning signs of stroke and to improve lifestyle habits which may reduce stroke risk and to enter rehabilitation as soon after a stroke as possible. Warning signs of a stroke may include: sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg on one side of the body; sudden dimness or loss of vision, particularly in one eye; loss of speech or trouble talking or understanding speech; sudden severe

headaches with no apparent cause; unsteadiness or sudden falls, particularly if accompanied by any of the previous symptoms.

Some risk factors for stroke, like age, heredity, race or diabetes are inherited. (Statistics show that African-Americans have more than a 60 percent greater risk of death and disability from stroke than Caucasians.) Others are a function of aging. Still other result from lifestyle habits that can be modified with the help of a physician. "Control your high blood pressure and heart disease; stop smoking, exercise regularly and try to maintain the proper weight to reduce your risk for stroke," advises Neumyer.

## Tendinitis doesn't affect only athletes

Have you ever wondered why baseball pitchers such as Nolan Ryan, Doc Gooden and Roger Clemens require a minimum of three days' rest between appearances?

After all, lumberjacks, nurses and bus drivers don't get three days off for every day on the job. And they work every bit as hard as the average major-league hurler, probably harder. What's more, they don't make \$4 million of \$5 million a year.

Well, it turns out that there's a good reason for pitcher-pampering: tendinitis.

Baseball announcers call this

condition a "sore shoulder" or a "sore elbow". But in medical terms, it is an inflammation of tendons, or ligaments, which are hard, inflexible cords or tissue fibers that join muscle to bone. Repeated stress on joints - like that from throwing a baseball - is a common cause of tendinitis.


What happens is that the repetitive activity swells or tears the tendons, possible leading to chronic soreness, scarring and stiffening, and restriction or loss of movement. When tendinitis develops in the elbow, we call it epicondylitis, or "tennis elbow." When

it occurs in the tendons linking leg muscles to the heel of the foot, we call it Achilles tendinitis.

Anyone can develop tendinitis as a result of vigorous repetitive movements. But those who exercise strenuously or take part in physically demanding sports such as football, basketball, baseball, volleyball, tennis and running are among the most vulnerable. And women who wear high-heeled shoes are at risk of developing Achilles tendinitis.

If you think you have developed tendinitis, check with your physician.

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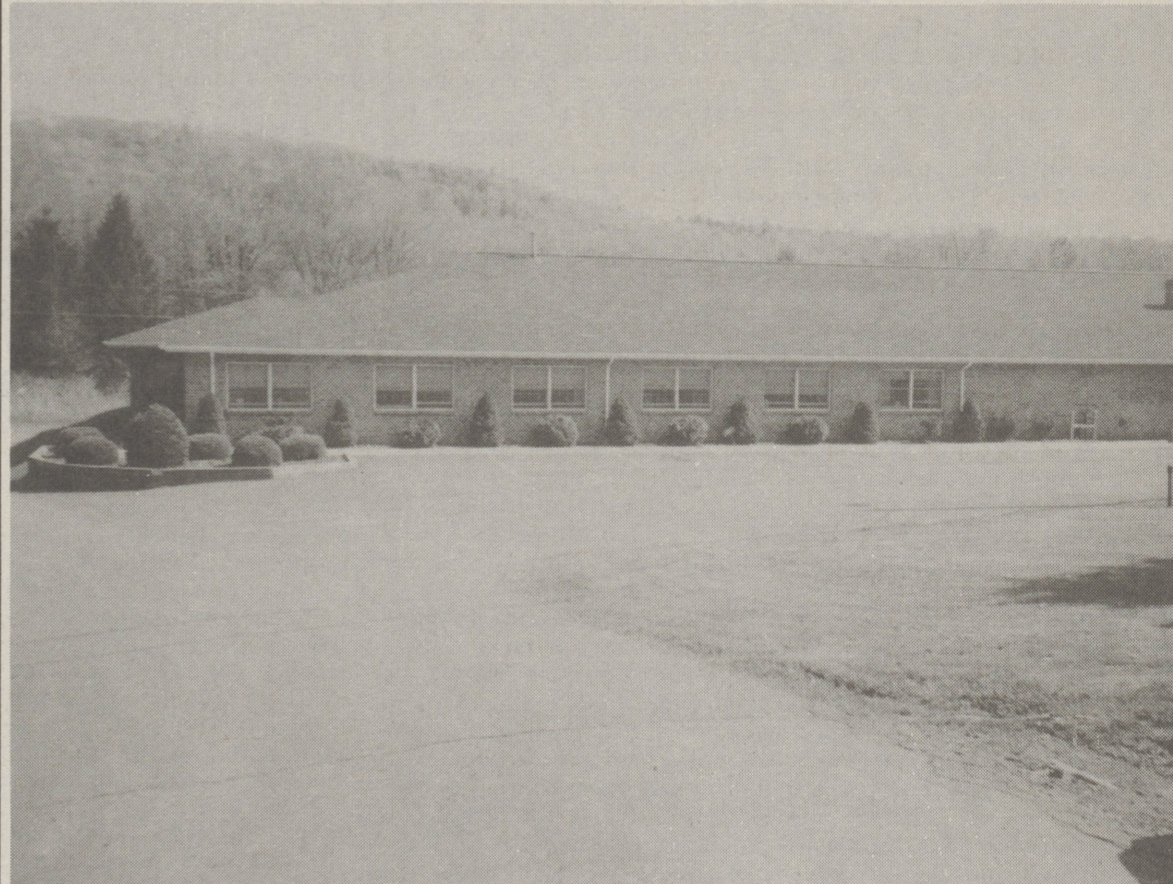
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