

# Water way to go

## Advice to help look after your eyes in the summer



THE COLLEGE  
OF OPTOMETRISTS

Swimming and water-sports are a great way of keeping fit during the summer months, but looking after your eyesight should be a priority when preparing for activities that involve water.

Experts from The College of Optometrists are offering advice to help look after your eyes, whether you prefer being in the pool or the sea.

Here are some key hints and tips to protect and keep your eyes safe:

- Chlorine can irritate the eyes and may cause redness, protect your eyes when in the water by wearing goggles.
- Contact lens wearers should not swim in their contact lenses and should always remove their lenses before showering or using a hot tub. If you are a contact lens or spectacle wearer, it is particularly important to invest in prescription goggle lenses microorganisms in the water may attach themselves to the lens and cause an infection in your eye. This can be extremely painful and in severe cases could blind you.
- Goggles with UV protection will also help to protect eyes from the damaging effects of the sun if swimming outside, which is especially important as water can reflect UV rays and increase the potential of harm to your eyes.
- For a goggle to work properly, you need to create a good seal. It should make consistent contact with the bone around your eyes rather than with the socket itself. If the skin around your eyes goes a different colour, this means that the goggle is too tight, there should be no gaps between the goggle and your face.
- Remember to wear good quality sunglasses with dark lenses when sailing, fishing or jet-skiing. Polarised lenses will help block glare and cut reflection, helping anglers to see “through” the water. Sunlight can damage the retina and the lens of the eye, and we risk causing long term damage to our eyesight, developing conditions such as cataracts and possibly AMD (Age-related Macular Degeneration) by remaining unprotected. Good sunglasses don’t need to be expensive: you can purchase perfectly adequate protective sunglasses from high street stores. Look out for glasses carrying the "CE" Mark and British Standard BS EN 1836:1997, which ensures that the sunglasses offer a safe level of UV protection.