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Alarming Statistic: 30% of Americans Don't Know Watching Eclipse Unprotected Can Cause Permanent Eye Damage

ATLANTA, GA (April 4, 2024) – Nearly 30% of Americans don't know that looking directly into a solar eclipse without proper eye protection can cause permanent distortions or blind spots in their vision, according to a new study. Now, Georgia's doctors of optometry are offering safe viewing tips for the Total Solar Eclipse that will occur locally starting at approximately 1:45 p.m. on Monday, April 8, 2024.

"We often encourage the people of Georgia to care for their eyes and #BeVisionSmart," said Dr. Nacondus G. Gamble, president of the Georgia Optometric Association. "This year's total solar eclipse – even though Georgia is outside of the path of totality – is when problems may occur and people forget the basics and ignore advice to be vision smart!"

Tips for viewing a total solar eclipse

- Except during the brief total phase of a total solar eclipse, when the Moon completely blocks the Sun's bright face, it's not safe to look directly at the Sun without specialized eye protection for solar viewing.
- Remember, sunglasses, smoked glass, unfiltered telescopes or magnifiers, and polarizing filters are unsafe.
- Keep in mind: eclipse glasses are NOT regular sunglasses – regular sunglasses, no matter how dark, are not safe for viewing the sun.

Cautions

- Use only approved solar eclipse viewers. The only safe way to view a partially eclipsed sun is through special-purpose solar filters, such as "eclipse glasses" or viewers that meet international standard ISO 12312-2 for safe viewing.
- Inspect your eclipse glasses or handheld viewer before use – if torn, scratched, or otherwise damaged, discard them.
- Only within the path of totality—and once the moon completely blocks the sun—can eclipse viewers safely be removed to view totality.

Signs of Trouble

It can take a few hours to a few days after viewing the solar eclipse to realize the damage that has occurred. If you experience discomfort or vision problems following the eclipse, visit your local doctor of optometry for an in-person, comprehensive eye exam.

Some common symptoms include:

- Loss of central vision,
- Distorted vision, and
- Altered color vision.

For additional information or to find a doctor of optometry near you visit the Georgia Optometric Association at www.GOAeyes.com.

The Georgia Optometric Association is a statewide professional organization representing over 700 doctors of optometry located in communities throughout the state of Georgia. Founded in 1904, the GOA and its members work to provide the public with quality vision and eye care services. For more information visit www.GOAeyes.com, [www.Instagram.com/goaeyes](https://www.instagram.com/goaeyes), [www.Facebook.com/GeorgiaOptometricAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaOptometricAssociation) or [www.Twitter.com/GOA_eyes](https://www.twitter.com/GOA_eyes).