



## Here Comes the Sun!

Kids can get different colored rubber bands for their braces and colorful casts for broken bones, but generally few medical devices are considered fashion accessories. Most patients understand their everyday prescription eyewear is a necessary medical device but still view sunwear as a luxury—something to make them look “cool”. Helping your patients understand that sunglasses are a necessary item to protect their precious eyesight from damage is a powerful sales tool. People are more apt to listen carefully to advice that will protect them from damage. The added benefit is a medical device that can also be a fantastic fashion statement!

Not everyone needs prescription glasses, but anyone who exposes their eyes to sun need protection from it. Studies have shown that UV radiation can cause damage to the eyes and skin, including cataracts and macular degeneration. Glare can also be damaging to eyesight, causing fatigue from brightness and distraction. In certain situations, glare can also be dangerous. A case in point is driving, where glare has been identified as causing traffic accidents and injuries. Polarized lenses greatly reduce glare for overall safety.

The conversation concerning the need for sunwear should begin with the doctor during the exam. The receptionist can also remind the patient to bring their current sunglasses with them so the doctor can discuss the importance. If their sunglasses happen to be cheapies from the local gas station, show them how distorted the “E” can become on the eye chart from the substandard optics most cheap sunglasses provide. During the exam, the patient can be educated on the damage that the sun poses to their vision. This can be supported by posters demonstrating the effects of sun placed throughout the dispensary and hallways.

Ask the patient if they would like to select their clear or sunwear pair first. Offering a special discount if they purchase two pairs can help overcome resistance. Even if you do not make the same margin on the second pair, it is still increased revenue to your bottom line. A special program for your 20/20 patients and contact lens wearers for sunwear purchases can

also help keep the sales in your office rather than the drugstore. In fact, a prescription for 0.00D sunwear with additional comments of “polarized” and “backside AR”, may be all that is needed to complete the sale. And don’t forget kids! They accumulate 80% of lifetime sun exposure in the first 18 years of their life.

Tinted sunlenses will be an improvement over cheap sunglasses, but polarized lenses will provide the best vision and clarity. Polarized lenses are available in a wide range of styles, materials and colors. With the ever increasing popularity of digital, many designs are now available in wrap designs to accommodate the popular wrap sunwear. To determine your patient’s unique sunwear needs, a lifestyle questionnaire is an excellent way to discover your patient’s best solution. Asking questions verbally is helpful as you can query the patient as needed for additional information.

Recent advancements in technology have broadened the function of polarized lenses by adding a photochromic element. Drivewear, Transitions Performance Sunwear and the soon to be released Transitions Vantage lenses combine the benefits of polarized lenses with light reactive tint. These lenses are especially beneficial to patients that spend a large portion of their day in and out of doors.

An in-store demonstration is the best way to present the benefits of polarization over tinted lenses. No matter how much explanation is offered, an image is worth a thousand words. Keep samples of several colors of polarized lenses at hand to demonstrate how they work. Many manufacturers have produced impactful demonstration displays. The counter cards hide an image that can only be seen when polarized lenses are worn. Some of the displays include a plano lorgnette, or use a plano sunglass in your inventory. Patients are amazed, and the lenses frequently sell themselves.

Sunwear is a huge market and you may be missing out by simply not asking your patients if they would like to purchase sunglasses. A little dedication in recommending and positioning sunlenses can mean a huge impact to your sales— as well as increased customer satisfaction and comfort!

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## ***ANNOUNCEMENT!***

Midwest Monthly will be changing to a quarterly newsletter with the next issue to be published July 2012. New format but with the same great industry information you have come to expect from Midwest Labs! See you in July!