

Solar Eclipse Safety:
River Valley Eye Professionals Encourages Safe and Fun Viewing of “The Great American Eclipse”

Just in case you haven't heard, there's a rare celestial event on the way! On August 21, a total solar eclipse will touch the U.S. mainland for the first time since 1979, following a path that crosses the country from Salem, Oregon to Charleston, South Carolina. Tens of millions of people who live within a 70-mile radius of its cross-country track will witness the eclipse in totality (the sun completely blocked by the moon). Those of us in Northfield as well as millions of others outside this narrow strip will enjoy a partial eclipse. River Valley Eye Professionals is urging everyone to view the eclipse with proper eye protection to avoid any temporary or permanent eye damage from the sun.

“The eclipse is a rare moment that the whole country is able to share,” said Dr. Nathan Heilman. “As primary eye health and vision care experts, we want to help and ensure everyone enjoys it safely by protecting their eyes.”

To ensure that you won't miss this remarkable sight, River Valley Eye Professionals has shared a few tips for safe viewing:

- **Get centered and enjoy the view.** Within the path of totality, you can safely witness the two or more minutes when the moon completely covers the sun with the naked eye. Here in Northfield, your eyes should always be protected by verified viewing tools. Never look directly at the sun without eye protection, even briefly. Visit eclipse.aas.org to access eclipse duration charts.
- **Know your duration.** Outside of the path of totality, always use solar filters. We want to reinforce that the only safe way to look directly at the uneclipsed or partially eclipsed sun is through special-purpose solar filters or other ISO-certified filters, such as “eclipse glasses” or handheld solar viewers. However, even with these viewers, one should view the eclipse with them no longer than three minutes continuously before breaking away. Approved viewing devices can be purchased from a number of reputable sources. You may refer to the American Astronomical Society's (AAS) website - <https://eclipse.aas.org/resources/solar-filters> - for a list of manufacturers.
- **Be aware of harmful solar exposure.** If you stare at the sun without protection, you may experience damage to your retina (the tissue at the back of your eye) called “solar retinopathy.” This damage can occur without any sensation of pain, since the retina does not have pain receptors. The injury can be temporary or permanent. Please contact our office if an accident occurs.
- **Visit your eye doctor.** Check in with River Valley Eye Professionals for information about safely viewing the eclipse. If you experience any problems with your eyes or vision after the eclipse, our office will be able to provide you with the medical care you need.

To access additional information and educational materials on the solar eclipse, visit either eclipse.aas.org or eclipse2017.nasa.gov