

# 52 Weeks to Health: Safe Eclipse Viewing

Posted on August 16, 2017



## Public Health Officials Issue Advice for Safe Viewing of Upcoming Solar Eclipse

*\*Editor's Note: Video footage related to eclipse eye safety is available [here](#). Video footage for an eclipse safety kit is available [here](#).*

*Follow precautions to avoid permanent eye damage including blindness*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 15, 2017)** – The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH), within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) is warning the public not to directly look at the upcoming solar eclipse on Aug. 21 without the proper equipment and techniques.

People from all over the world will converge on the U.S. to witness the eclipse. While the solar eclipse will occur across the continental U.S., those within an estimated 70-mile path labeled “Path of the Total Solar Eclipse” which includes Hopkinsville, Paducah and the Land Between the Lakes will experience a total solar eclipse, lasting up to 2 minutes and 40 seconds. Outside of this path, observers will witness a deep partial eclipse, which will partially block the sun’s

light. The last time a total solar eclipse occurred across any part of the contiguous U.S. was in 1979. Following the 2017 solar eclipse, the next total solar eclipse will not be visible over the continental U.S. until April 8, 2024.

“Looking at an eclipse without proper eye protection can cause permanent and irreversible eye damage including blindness”, said Hiram C. Polk, Jr., M.D., commissioner of DPH. “We encourage everyone to enjoy this special celestial event, but urge the public not to look directly at the uneclipsed or partially eclipsed sun without special purpose solar filters such as eclipse glasses or handheld solar viewers.”

There are several ways to safely view a solar eclipse and avoid permanent eye damage:

- Eclipse glasses or handheld solar viewers that meet the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 12312-2 international standard for eye and face protection products intended for direct observation of the sun may be used. Homemade filters or ordinary sunglasses, even very dark ones, are not safe for looking at the sun.
- Telescopes with solar filters can also be used. Never look through a telescope without a solar filter on the large end of the scope. Never use small solar filters that attach to the eyepiece as found on some older telescopes.
- Pinhole projectors and other projection techniques are a safe, indirect viewing technique for observing an image of the sun and can be constructed using paper or cardstock.

Do not look at the uneclipsed or partially eclipsed sun through an unfiltered camera, telescope, binoculars or other optical device. Similarly, do not look at the sun through a camera, telescope, binoculars or any other optical device while using your eclipses glasses or handheld solar viewer. The concentrated solar rays will damage the filter and enter your eye(s), causing serious injury. Seek expert advice before using a solar filter with a camera, telescope, binoculars or any other optical device.

In addition to eye safety measures, the following additional public health safety tips are recommended:

- Drink plenty of fluids. Increase your normal fluid intake regardless of your activity level. You will need to drink more fluids than your thirst level indicates. This is especially true for people age 65 and older who have a decreased ability to respond to external temperature changes. In addition, avoid drinking beverages containing alcohol, because they will actually cause you to lose more fluid.
- Wear appropriate clothing and sunscreen. Choose lightweight, light colored, loose fitting clothing. In the hot sun, wear a wide-brimmed hat that will provide shade and keep the head cool. Sunscreen should be SPF 15 or greater and applied 30 minutes before going out into the sun.
- Apply an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered insect repellent such as DEET, picardin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-methane-diol or 2-undecanone. Always follow directions and reapply as directed.
- Be sure to keep your hands clean to avoid take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

For more information on safe viewing of eclipses, please visit <http://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/safety>.

For more information on the Solar Eclipse Across America go to [http://www.eclipse2017.org/2017/path\\_through\\_the\\_US.htm](http://www.eclipse2017.org/2017/path_through_the_US.htm).

**-30-**

*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services, the Department for Public Health, and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*