

MEDIA RELEASE

Optometrists throw shade on tiny sunglasses trend

Wednesday, 11 October 2017, Melbourne: People who are serious about the health of their eyes would do well to think twice about the latest celebrity fashion trend – teeny tiny sunglasses.

On the eve of World Sight Day, Optometry Australia, Australia's peak professional body of optometrists, has warned the '90s inspired 'microshades' trend, which made an impact at [London and Paris Fashion Weeks](#) recently, aren't the ideal style to protect your eyes from harmful UV rays.

Unlike the aviators' resurgence of 2016, this season's 'microshade' or 'Matrix' sunglasses trend has been adopted by Instagram it-girls like the Kardashians and [Bella Hadid](#), and are often worn down the bridge of the nose, allowing UV rays to penetrate the eyes.

Optometry Australia's resident optometrist, Luke Arundel, said, "While we welcome any celebrity attention given to sunglasses, microshades appear to be worn as pure fashion accessories and not serious UV protectors".

Our eyes are 10 times more sensitive to UV than our skin and too much exposure to UV light increases the risk of various eye diseases and cancer, with some 300 Australians diagnosed with eye cancer annually. Cataract and macular degeneration, two of the most common conditions experienced by older Australians have also been linked to cumulative UV exposure over a person's lifetime.

"We welcome sunglasses being made the 'must have accessory', but they must also protect your eyes rather than just your image".

"Choosing sunglasses that don't protect from side and reflected UV is a common mistake. Light entering the eyes from the side of the head can cause pterygium – a wing of fleshy tissue to grow over the surface of the eye which in turn can cause redness, irritation and affect vision (along with the eyes' cosmetic appearance).

"This is also referred to as surfer's eye as pterygium is common in this group and in occupations where people spend a lot of time outside.

"Wearing close-fitting sunglasses with a wide arm or a wrap-around style, along with a broad-brimmed hat is the best way to protect your eyes."

Most optometrists stock the latest range of designer sunglasses and in styles that not only protect against UV but are also very fashionable, Mr Arundel said.

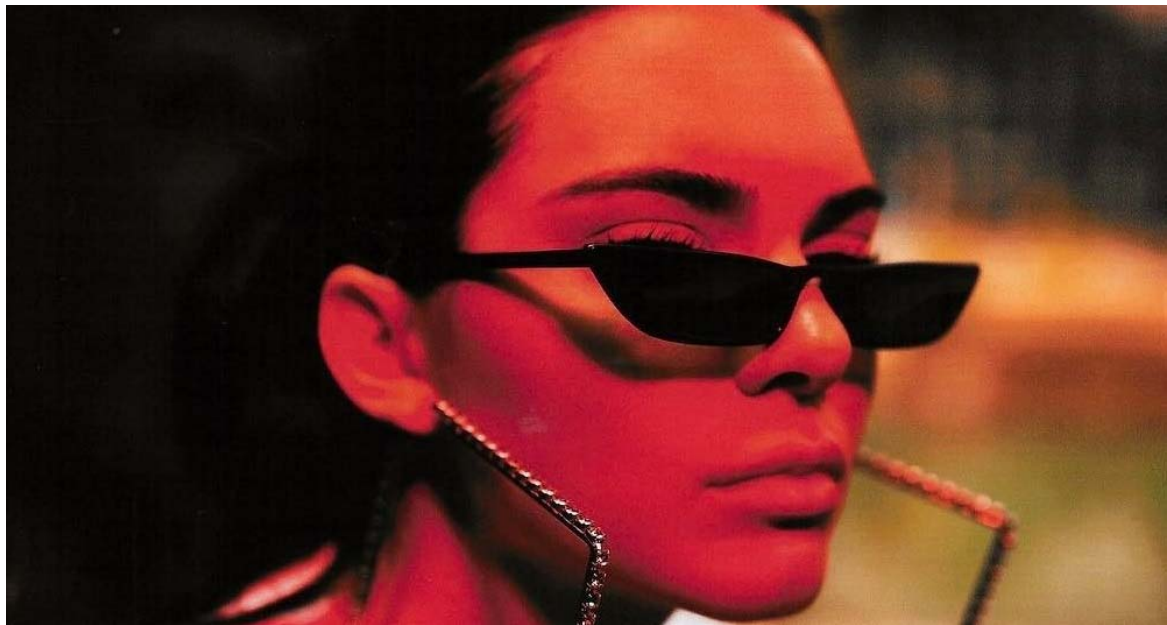
Mr Arundel emphasised the importance of wearing sunglasses all year round. "Don't be fooled by clouds or the fact that you're in the shade: a significant amount of UV penetrates cloud cover and is reflected off surfaces such as the ground, sand or water," he said.

"When purchasing sunglasses, remember to check the sun protection factor on the swing tag, look for high category (Australian standard) lenses and remember that a high retail price doesn't always mean better protection," Mr Arundel said.

Wearing sunglasses, eating a healthy balanced diet, quitting smoking and regularly visiting your optometrist for an eye examination are the best things you can do to avoid eye disease.

According to a [Vision 2020 report](#), approximately 90 per cent of blindness or vision impairment is preventable or treatable – and healthy eyes are always in fashion.

Find an optometrist in your area at goodvisionforlife.com.au.



Caption: Kendall Jenner sporting the Matrix-style tiny sunglasses trend. Source: Instagram

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Optometry Australia is the peak professional body for optometrists. Representing eight out of every 10 Australian-based optometrists, Optometry Australia's focus is to lead and advance the profession of optometry by putting eye-health front and centre of Australian health care.

ⁱ Cancer Council Australia