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EDITOR:
KRISTIE ROCHE-CYMEK
KRISTIE.ROCHE@BENECARD.COM

WWW.BENECARDASSOCIATION.COM

Winter Eye Safety

Did you know it is just as important to wear sunglasses in the winter as it is in the summer? Just like you should protect your skin with sunscreen year-round, you must also protect your eyes with sunglasses. Summer through winter, spending prolonged periods of time outside increases the risk of damaging your eyes.

Winter sun-protection is often overlooked as people tend to spend less time outside, but the sun is *particularly* dangerous in snowy conditions and can quickly cause serious harm to your eyes due to the reflection of the sun off the snow. People who enjoy outdoor activities such as skiing, snowboarding, sledding, hiking, etc. are all at a greater risk of damaging their eyes because of this reflecting light. Constant exposure without proper protection in this climate can lead to cataracts, growths in the eye that may or may not become cancerous, and photokeratitis which is also known as snow blindness ¹.

Similar to a sunburn on your eyes, snow blindness occurs when your eyes are exposed to UV rays reflecting off snow and ice. Symptoms of snow blindness include watery eyes, swelling, blurry vision, and pain. This condition is especially dangerous because the damage done to the front surface of the eye can happen very suddenly. But while it may be sudden, it is also easily preventable by simply wearing protective goggles or sunglasses with 100% UV protection when you are outside in the snow or in icy conditions ¹.

High altitude can also increase the chances of eye damage, so practice extra caution when skiing, snowboarding, or sledding in high elevations. Keep these important factors in mind when you hit the slopes:

- As elevation increases so does UV exposure
- UV rays are strong even on cloudy days
- Cold, dry, and windy conditions can all contribute to snow blindness

It is imperative that you don't skip out on wearing your sunglasses in the winter. Purchase glasses that have the following protective qualities to take care of your eyes:

- Offers 100% UV-A and UV-B protection to block radiation²
- Lenses match in color and are gray in tint to properly protect your eyes. Gray tinted glasses reduce glare and are better for all-purpose use; they protect your eyes well on both sunny and cloudy days. ³

Remember that while the winter months bring colder temperatures, it does not mean the sun is any less harmful to your eyes. Especially in snowy climates, your eyes are at an increased risk of being damaged without proper protection. For more tips on how to protect your eyes in the winter, consult with your optometrist or ophthalmologist.



Sources:
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3: <https://www.aao.org/healthy-eyes/caring-for-your-eyes/uv-protection?sso=y> | <https://www.allaboutvision.com/sunglasses/benefits-wearing-during-winter/>
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Storing old or expired medications is something many of us have become accustomed to—often because we are uncertain of proper disposal procedures, or we simply believe the medicine will still work beyond the expiration date. Medication is not something that spoils like milk, so how can you tell when a drug has expired? Prescription and over-the-counter drugs are often given an expiration date to indicate when the drug's efficacy could start to decrease. While it does not mean the drug has necessarily spoiled, the expiration date indicates the date where the drug will no longer be guaranteed by the manufacturer to be as effective and safe as expected.

Many Americans do not even realize their medications have true expiration dates, and as a result, their cabinets are full of expired drugs. This is even more concerning in households with children. In a [recent study](#) from 2022, a total of 2,023 parents were surveyed on the matter and the results determined, "Less than half of parents believe that over-the-counter medicine is less effective past its expiration date, while one in five parents think it's unsafe".¹ This national poll demonstrates a lack of awareness regarding the importance of properly disposing of expired medications.

To help you better understand how to remove drugs from your home, we put together some tips below.

Safety & Storage Tips:

For the prescription drugs you do have that have not yet expired, it is important to store them safely. An [article](#) from Medical Xpress stated, "Younger children getting into medicine in the home is a major source of unintentional poisonings. For older children, access to these medicines brings risk of experimentation, diversion to peers, or other intentional misuse".¹ To prevent children from getting medications, store in high, out of reach or locked places where they will be very difficult for children of all ages to get their hands on.

Recycling/Disposal Tips:

For prescription drugs that *have* expired, there are several ways to safely dispose of them. One way to encourage people nationwide to get rid of their medications is [National Prescription Drug Take Back Day](#). Run by the DEA, National Prescription Drug Take Back Day occurs twice a year and encourages people to "dump" their unwanted drugs at a local drop-off site.

Another approach to remove expired drugs from your home is to reach out to your pharmacist. Pharmacists will be able to guide you through disposal options. Some pharmacies even offer drop-off services where you can mail or drop off your drugs at a box inside the pharmacy.

If you are not able to do either of the above-mentioned options, you can also discard medications safely in your own home. However, you must be extra careful to consider small children or pets that could get into the garbage. Here's how to discard medications in your home:

1. Check to see that the prescription bottle does not contain any personal information. If it does, you can scratch this off or cover your information with a marker.²
2. Check to see if the medication is on the [FDA flush list](#). Some medications, such as those that can result in death from just one dose if taken inappropriately, are recommended to be flushed down the toilet. **Remember, don't flush your medicine unless it is on the flush list!**
3. If not on the flush list, put the unwanted medications in a Ziploc or sealable bag filled with either dirt, cat litter, or used coffee grounds—make sure the bag is then closed and secure.
4. Lastly, throw the container in the garbage and be sure neither children nor pets can get to the discarded bag.

It is always best to keep in mind that, just like the food in your pantry, your medication also has an expiration date. To ensure you are getting the effective treatment you need from your medication, it is important to adhere to a medication's expiration date. Make sure to go through the contents of your medicine cabinet and, using the tips provided in this article, dispose of your expired medications properly.

Sources:

1: <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-10-parents-leftover-prescription-medications-home.html> | 2: <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/where-and-how-dispose-unused-medicines> | <https://www.cdc.gov/patientsafety/features/medication-storage.html> | <https://www.dea.gov/takebackday> | <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-fdas-flush-list-certain-medicines>

Top Employers Have a Retention Checklist - Here's Why

Spark Team at ADP (Originally published on ADP's blog, "Spark")

Retention is — and will continue to be — a universal concern for high-performing organizations. That's why ADP's Strategic Advisory Services team created a comprehensive retention checklist. Here are the four most important retention checklist questions ADP's VP of Strategic Advisory Services, Susan Hanold, thinks leaders should ask their organizations.

There's a reason HR leaders continue to be concerned about retention: It's nearly impossible to predict how employees will engage with the hiring landscape, whether the economy is up or down. The chaos of ongoing economic volatility, COVID-19 pandemic recovery and a workforce in the process of reshaping, well, everything is pushing organizations to ask some tough questions.

Whether you call it the Great Resignation or the Great Reshuffle, a lot of companies are being asked to reprioritize their top hiring and retention goals," says Susan Hanold, VP of Strategic Advisory Services at ADP. "Even as post-pandemic layoffs and furloughs return to normal, quit rates are still rising and organizations continue to be short-staffed. In some issues, it is beginning to affect safety and we're seeing accident rates going up as a result."

Retention is — and will continue to be — a universal concern for high performing organizations. That's why ADP's Strategic Advisory Services team created a comprehensive retention checklist of 25 questions to help organizations improve their retention strategies by narrowing their focus, identifying specific problems, and pinpointing the root cause of high churn.

Interested to learn how a retention checklist roots out serious problems and helps to guide an organization to an effective solution?

[Click here](#) to read the full article and learn more about how to better help those who don't feel like they belong in the workplace.



Image courtesy of www.adp.com

