

For the first time since 1979, people in the United States will have a chance to see a total solar eclipse. We have all seen the warnings not to stare directly at the eclipse without eye protection. While it might be tempting to ignore those warnings, don't. The light from an eclipse can do some serious damage.

SOT

Dr. Ben Kemp, OSF HealthCare Emergency Physician

"There is a concern if you get direct sunlight for too long of a period of time to the back of your eye, you can essentially burn your retina and have permanent vision loss, sometimes complete vision loss if that exposure is long enough and intense enough."

During the eclipse, more people are at risk of doing serious ocular damage. While it can be tough for people to stare at the sun on a normal day, the coverage of an eclipse can give people a dangerous sense of safety.

SOT

Dr. Ben Kemp, OSF HealthCare Emergency Physician

"That's actually the most dangerous time, because around the outside of the eclipse, you are still getting intense sunlight, but it's overall a little bit darker, so people think, 'I can look at it because it's not as bright out.' But you're still getting that intense sunlight in the back of your eye when it's not a complete total eclipse."

The following are some safe eclipse viewing tips from [NASA](#):

- Wear specially made "eclipse" glasses or welder's goggles rated 14 or higher
- Use specially designed solar telescopes or solar binoculars
- Use telescopes, camera or binoculars with approved solar filters only
- Use a pinhole projector (a card with a small hole punched in it will project an image of the sun)
- Supervise closely when children are using solar filters and eclipse glasses