

# HOW TO TALK TO PATIENTS ABOUT PRESCRIPTION SUN LENSES



Millions of people who could benefit from prescription sun lenses don't have them and are unaware they need them. In the U.S. independent market, consumers purchase 39 million pairs of prescription eyeglasses annually—but only 3 million are prescription sun lenses. This means that the overwhelming majority of your patients could be experiencing discomfort outdoors.

Why aren't more people investing in sun protection? As the ally of the eye care provider, HOYA conducted a detailed research study to find answers and share valuable information with our partners. We know wearing sun lenses will positively impact your patients and increasing sales of prescription sun lenses will benefit your practice. So, let us share the findings from our focus groups so you can help your patients and your practice.

## | How the focus groups worked

We recruited focus group participants aged 25-55 with a mix of interests, including fashion, outdoor activities like hiking, and active hobbies where vision is an important aspect, such as skiing and golfing. All participants use eyeglasses as their primary form of vision correction and wear them most of the time. Half of the people wear prescription sun lenses; the other half do not.

Participants completed three days of mobile diary pre-work to record their behavior and habits surrounding prescription eyeglasses and sunglasses. They shared photos of themselves in certain scenarios, such as getting into the car and enjoying outdoor activities, to demonstrate their use or non-use of prescription sun lenses.

This was followed by in-person interviews with four focus groups: male non-wearers, female non-wearers, male wearers and female wearers. We asked them questions such as: Why haven't you considered prescription sunglasses? What do you like about your prescription sunglasses? What do you dislike about your prescription sunglasses?

This helped us to identify barriers, motivators, misperceptions and competitive advantages we can leverage to change the way people think about prescription sun wear.



## | We found common misperceptions about prescription sun lenses

Wearers and non-wearers do not have an accurate picture of each other. When we asked them each to describe the other group, this is what we heard:

- People who do not wear prescription sun lenses are perceived either as young and unaware of the health dangers of the sun, potentially without insurance or the funds to invest in sun protection, or as older and sedentary, not spending much time outdoors.
- People who do wear prescription sun lenses are perceived either as older, established and affluent, with the ability to purchase additional prescription eyewear, or as elite athletes who require superior performance.

However, these characterizations do not reflect the actual lives of wearers and non-wearers. In reality, they have much more in common than they believe: Both groups have similar lifestyles and regularly engage in outdoor activities such as driving, watching sports games and enjoying time with their families in the sun.

## | The reality is everyone who spends time outdoors needs protection

The main difference between wearers and non-wearers is not in their circumstances, but in their behaviors. People without prescription sun lenses report going to great lengths to compensate for their lack of sun protection. They use non-corrective sunglasses, wear a hat or even avoid the sun altogether when they are uncomfortable being outdoors. Here are some quotes they shared:

- "My girlfriend said I was always squinting."
- "I would wear my regular glasses and use my hand to block the sun."
- "I watched my son's football game from the other side of the field so I could see."

On the other hand, people with prescription sun wear report strong emotional benefits. Here's what they told us:

- "I felt liberated when I first got my prescription sunglasses."
- "I can just be in the moment and play with my kids."
- "I am unstoppable. Prescription sunglasses allow me to comfortably participate and excel in outdoor activities."



**TIP**

Share these quotes with your patients! People without prescription sun lenses simply don't realize the comfort, clarity and safety they're missing. There is a big opportunity for eye care providers to better educate and inform patients on this topic.

## | You can help address your patients' needs and concerns

When we asked why patients wouldn't want to wear prescription sun lenses, they tended to list the following five reasons. Fortunately, there are sensible solutions to all of these barriers.

WHAT WE HEARD	BARRIER	SOLUTION
<p><i>"It feels like a luxury item that only very glamorous people would own."</i></p>	<p>People believe prescription sun lenses are only associated with designer brands. Consumers think only older, wealthier people wear prescription sunglasses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let patients know they can get the same prescription sun lenses in any frame at any price point.</li> <li>• Consider displaying prescription sun lenses mixed in with regular eyeglasses in-store, or in regular frames.</li> </ul>
<p><i>"I'd worry a lot about breaking them after spending so much money on them."</i></p>	<p>People believe prescription sun lenses are too expensive and that they might invest in them just to lose them. And people don't want to pay to replace prescription sunglasses each year to keep up with fashion trends.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help patients save by using insurance, maximizing benefits, utilizing flex spending accounts or with BOGO half-off deals.</li> <li>• Inform patients that because prescription sun lenses have a greater value than non-corrective sunglasses, most people take better care of them.</li> </ul>
<p><i>"It would be great if more health professionals discussed the benefits of prescription sun wear."</i></p>	<p>People don't consider the sun's impact on their health and safety unless they know someone who had a medical condition. They won't ask for sun protection because they don't realize they need it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain how prescription sun lenses will increase patients' comfort outdoors and are the best way to protect the eyes.</li> <li>• Point out that reducing glare while driving keeps your patient and others safer from accidents.</li> </ul>

WHAT WE HEARD	BARRIER	SOLUTION
<i>"Prescription sunglasses all look nerdy."</i>	People believe prescription sun lenses are unattractive, and some only associate prescription sun wear with photochromic lenses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't group Sensity with other prescription sun lenses.</li> <li>• Incorporate more photography that shows real prescription sun lens wearers in everyday situations.</li> </ul>
<i>"I wonder if they would be more trouble than they are worth."</i>	People believe prescription sun lenses are inconvenient. They think having to carry and remember an extra pair of glasses would be a hassle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although nothing competes with a pair of prescription sun lenses, the next best option would be photochromic lenses.</li> <li>• Recommend Sensity to people who are not open to carrying a second pair of glasses.</li> </ul>

## | The biggest barrier is the lack of conversation

Eye care providers simply aren't talking to patients about prescription sun lenses. Most people cannot recall their optometrist recommending prescription sunglasses, except in the event of a medical condition. Eye care providers may believe they are talking to patients about sun lenses—but the patients don't think so.

**TIP** The best tool you can use to help more patients discover the comfort of prescription sun lenses is to start the conversation. Patients trust you to care for their eyes, and they need to trust you to make good recommendations about sun protection.

During our research, participants told us they would like their eye care providers to educate them and prescribe them the lenses they need.

Participants also told us how you can present the information in a natural and helpful way:

<b>STONE OF VOICE</b>	Keep it conversational and educational. Be caring and concerned versus authoritative or scary.
<b>TIMING</b>	Talk about prescription sun lenses in the middle of the exam instead of at the end, where it may feel like a hard sell.
<b>ASK QUESTIONS</b>	Consider adding questions to patient intake forms that could help initiate conversations, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Family history</i>: Patient may need protection to delay hereditary disease.</li><li>• <i>Time spent outdoors</i>: Patient may need protection from UV and blue light.</li><li>• <i>Time driving</i>: Patient may need help reducing glare.</li></ul>

## | Start talking to your patients today

By using the conversation tips listed above—and keeping in mind the common concerns your patients may have—you should be prepared to start conversations with them and anticipate their questions and needs. Becoming a prescription sun lens specialist will not only improve your patients' outdoor experiences but will also benefit your practice. Use this research and leverage the opportunity to help more people discover the value of prescription sun protection.

