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For more information:
Monica Saenz Guerrero
Phone: (713) 526-2559, Ext. 106
msaenz@preventblindnesstexas.org

Prevent Blindness Texas Offers Free Information to Protect Eyes During Upcoming Solar Eclipse

***- Non-profit Group Provides Tips on How to View Historic Solar Event Without
Damaging Eyes -***

Houston, TX (July 18, 2017) – Across North America on Monday, August 21, 2017, a solar eclipse will be visible to millions of people. According to the [National Aeronautics and Space Administration](#) (NASA), a solar eclipse occurs when the moon blocks any part of the sun. As part of this eclipse, some parts of the United States will experience a brief total eclipse, when the moon completely blocks the sun's face for up to 2 minutes, 40 seconds.

However, looking directly at the sun can be very harmful to the eyes. In fact, exposing eyes to the sun without proper eye protection during a solar eclipse can cause "[eclipse blindness](#)" or retinal burns, also known as solar retinopathy. This exposure to the light can cause damage or even destroy cells in the retina (the back of the eye) that transmit what you see to the brain. This damage can be temporary or permanent and occurs with no pain. It can take a few hours to a few days after viewing the solar eclipse to realize the damage that has occurred.

Prevent Blindness Texas has established a [web page](#) and [fact sheet](#) with information about an eclipse, potential related dangers to vision, and how to protect your eyes from injury during the event.

Prevent Blindness Texas also offers the following tips on how to view the eclipse safely:

- **Pinhole projection:** This is the safest and most inexpensive way of watching a solar eclipse. This helps you avoid looking directly at the eclipse by using a projected image. This do-it-yourself project includes making a pinhole in a cardboard paper with the sun on one side and a piece of paper to project the image on the other side. Keep in mind not to look through the pinhole at the sun.
- **Welder's glass:** Number 14 welder's glass provides effective protection and can be found at a local welder's supply store. This glass will reduce the harmful rays that are emitted during the eclipse. Do not use if there are any scratches or damage to the glass.

- **Mylar filters:** Aluminized Mylar plastic sheets are available as eclipse vision glasses or can be cut and made into a viewing box. Do not use if there are any scratches or damage to the sheet.
- **Other ways:** Other ways to safely watch a solar eclipse are on television or at a planetarium.

In addition, Prevent Blindness Texas warns against using the following methods:

- **Smartphone:** Watching a solar eclipse on your smartphone camera can put you at risk of accidentally looking at the sun when trying to line up your camera. It could possibly also damage your smartphone camera. Don't take the risk.
- **Camera viewfinder:** Never look at a solar eclipse through the optical viewfinder of a camera. It can damage your eyes in the same way as looking directly at it.
- **Unsafe filters:** Unless specifically designed for viewing a solar eclipse, no filter is safe to use with any optical device (telescopes, binoculars, sunglasses, etc.).

Prevent Blindness Texas strongly recommends that anyone who plans on viewing the solar eclipse consult an eye care professional to determine the safest viewing option. Anyone who experiences changes in vision or worsening eye pain after viewing the eclipse should seek treatment from an eye doctor immediately.

“By wearing the proper eye protection, everyone can enjoy this amazing spectacle of nature safely,” said **Monica Guerrero, Vice-President of Programs and Community Outreach of Prevent Blindness Texas**. “We want to encourage the public to take the right precautions in advance to safeguard their eyes from the sun’s powerful rays.”

For more information on how to protect vision during a solar eclipse, please call Prevent Blindness Texas at 1-888-98-SIGHT or visit www.preventblindness.org/solar-eclipse-and-your-eyes.

About Prevent Blindness Texas

Founded in 1956, Prevent Blindness is the state’s leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness Texas touches the lives of thousands of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the Texas public. Through a network of regional offices and volunteers, we are committed to eliminating preventable blindness in Texas. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-888-98-SIGHT or, visit us on the Web at preventblindnesstexas.org or www.facebook.com/preventblindnesstexas or www.twitter.com/pbtexas.

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