Region of Peel
working with you

Health Services

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March 13, 2024

To: Parents/Guardians and Staff

RE: Upcoming partial solar eclipse safety information for child care settings

Peel Region will witness a ***partial solar eclipse*** on **Monday, April 8, 2024.** The solar eclipse event in Peel Region will last a few hours beginning just prior to 2 pm and concluding around 4:30pm.

A solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes between the earth and the sun, casting a shadow on the Earth.

It is not safe to look at the sun without proper eye protection, as looking at even a small sliver before or after totality (the time that the sun is completely covered by the moon) can be harmful to vision. Looking directly at the Sun without appropriate eye protection can lead to serious problems like temporary visual loss, blurred vision, retinal burns, and eyesight loss (immediate or delayed onset). The retinas do not have pain sensors to signal that one's eyes are being damaged by the sun. Eye damage may not be immediately apparent, and symptoms can take 12-48 hours to appear.

Children are especially at risk, as young eyes transmit more light through to the retina than adult eyes. This makes children's eyes more susceptible to damage from intense light.

Safety information

Children should always be supervised during solar viewing activities whether indoors or outdoors. Very young children may be prone to pulling off their glasses.

- When outdoors, ensure children are using appropriate eye protection (e.g., eclipse glasses) to view the solar eclipse.
- When indoors, ensure window coverings are pulled down and children do not go near the window, unless proper eye protection is worn.
- Prior to viewing the solar eclipse, supervisors/staff should consider the likelihood that the children will wear eclipse glasses properly and not remove them during the eclipse.

Eclipse glasses with specialized filters adhering to the ISO 12312-2 international standard can be worn to prevent eye damage.

- Eclipse glasses must be worn during all times of the eclipse, including before and after partial totality to avoid eye injuries. Regular sunglasses will not protect people's eyes.
- Eclipse glasses should be inspected for wrinkles or scratches ahead of use and should not be used if damaged.
- Ensure that eclipse glasses fully cover your field of vision.
- Put on glasses when looking away from the sun, then look at the eclipse. Look away from the sun before taking glasses off.
- Order ISO 12312-2 certified glasses soon as possible as arrival may be impacted.

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If appropriate eye protection is not available, stay indoors and away from windows or consider alternate viewing strategies:

- Consider rescheduling outdoor playtime for another time of day that does not coincide with the solar eclipse if safe viewing of the solar eclipse is not possible.
- The eclipse can be safely viewed through an eclipse box, or pinhole projector that can be readily assembled using common household materials. Instructions are available from a variety of agencies (listed below).
- The event will be Live-Streamed. This is an excellent indirect viewing option, particularly if the day is cloudy.

It is not safe to look at the sun through a camera lens (including phone camera), telescope, binoculars, or any other optical device.

If temporary visual loss, blurred vision, or eyesight loss is experienced during or after the event, seek medical assistance immediately.

Resources

1. Canadian Space Agency. Toolkit for educators and youth – Solar and lunar eclipses. Dec 5, 2023. Toolkit for educators and youth on lunar and solar eclipses | Canadian Space Agency (asc-csa.gc.ca)
2. Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC). 2024 Total Solar Eclipse. 2023. Available from: https://rasc.ca/eclipse2024
3. American Astronomical Society (AAS). Eclipse Planning Resources. Eclipse Planning Resources. Jan 31, 2024. Available from: https://eclipse2024resources.com/
4. NASA. Eclipse Safety. Jan 2024. Available from: https://science.nasa.gov/eclipses/safety/
5. McMaster University Planetarium. 2024 Eclipse [Internet]. W.J. McCallion Planetarium. Jan 31, 2024. Available from: https://planetarium.physics.mcmaster.ca/2024-eclipse/

Sincerely,
Peel Public Health