

Looking at Sun Directly Causes Damage to Retina

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A total solar eclipse will take place on 9 March in several areas of Indonesia. This rare occurrence obviously draws many people's attention. But this natural phenomenon shall not be witnessed by people by looking directly into the sun as it will harm the eyes.

"Looking at the sun directly for a long time will burn the retina or macula, damaging visual nerves that are the centre of sights," said ophthalmologist at Dr Sardjito General Hospital, Prof. dr. Suhardjo, on Monday (7/3).

This is caused by the ultraviolet B rays emitted by the sun, even during the solar eclipse when not the entire sun is fully covered. Direct exposure to solar lights can cause retinopathy solaris damage to the retina that causes near-sightedness.

"Physically, the eye seems fine, the damage can only be seen through special examination on the retina. So far, I've only treated one patient who had this damage after this boy looked at the sun directly for almost 15 minutes," he said.

Hence, he suggested people wanting to see the solar eclipse use eye protector, or media that can absorb the ultraviolet B rays, such as coloured glasses that can absorb the same length ultraviolet waves at least equal to the wave length of green colour.

"Using regular glasses or camera lens without special filters may still pose a risk as they can not adequately absorb the ultraviolet B rays that are harmful to the eye," he explained.

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