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Eye doctor's warning

3D TV's harmful effects

A LEADING eye doctor has called for health warnings to be issued to protect Australians from the potentially harmful effects of 3D TV and video games.

Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital ophthalmologist Dr Lionel Kowal said more than a million Australians were susceptible to symptoms ranging from headaches, eyestrain and dizziness to nausea from watching 3D TV.

He said the number of viewers at risk from such harmful side-effects were greater than those suffering either diabetes or epilepsy.

"People who are not able to appreciate the images in 3D books, would either be unable to appreciate the 3D in movies, or may develop unpleasant symptoms from watching them," Dr Kowal said.

The warning comes as the first 3D TV sets went on sale across Australia last week. 3D video games are expected to be a huge incentive to invest in the new technology.

Greg Thom

technology reporter

Dr Kowal, who specialises in the treatment of eye disorders in children, predicted the prospect of spending thousands of dollars on a 3D television would encourage parents to heed advice from eye specialists.

3D technology tricks the brain by showing different images to the left and right eye which are then layered together by the brain to produce a single 3D picture.

Dr Kowal said more than 90 per cent of Australians had either near perfect or perfect 3D vision and would have no problems viewing 3D content.

A further 5 per cent who have no 3D vision would also be unaffected. It is the remaining 5 per cent with limited 3D vision who are likely to experience problems.

Dr Kowal urged anyone considering buying a 3D TV to spend between five and 10 minutes watching it before they spent thousands of dollars on a new set.