

Eye on the Prize Healthy Vision

When it comes to vision, most of us think of glasses, readers, and contact lenses, which for many play a key role in enabling our daily work and lives. However, correcting vision isn't the only attention we should give our eyes.

According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), around 93 million adults in the United States have a high risk for serious vision loss, though only half visited an eye doctor in the past 12 months. And, vision disability is one of the top 10 disabilities among adults 18 years and older.

Fortunately, there are some simple protective measures that can be taken to help protect vision:

Sun Protection

Wear sunglasses when outside or when driving even on cloudy days. Wearing sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB radiation protects your eyes and lowers your risk of cataracts.

Annual Exam

Many eye diseases don't have early symptoms so having a yearly eye exam will help you to find conditions in their early stages and take preventive action.

Use Eye Drops

Redness and dry eyes can result from looking at a computer screen for long periods of time. Lubricating eye drops can help soothe dry eyes and reduce the risk of serious complications, including eye inflammation, corneal ulcers, and vision loss.

Manage Health Conditions

Health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure can raise your risk for some eye diseases such as glaucoma.

Eye Opener: Common Eye Conditions

Age-Related Macular Degeneration

A dark, empty area or blind spot appears in the center of vision. Risk factors are being 50 and older, smoking, eating a diet high in saturated fats, high blood pressure.

Glaucoma

Damage to the optic nerve caused by fluid build-up in the eye putting pressure on the eye and leading to optic nerve damage.

Cataract

Clouding of the lens of the eye causing blurry vision. Surgery can correct the condition.

Diabetic Retinopathy

A complication of diabetes where high blood sugar damages the blood vessels in the tissue at the back of the eye (the retina).

Refractive Errors

Conditions that affect the shape of the eye, causing blurry vision. They include nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism, and presbyopia. These can be corrected by eyeglasses, contact lenses, or in some cases surgery.

Eat Foods that Support Eye Health

Foods such as dark, leafy greens (such as kale, spinach, and collard greens) and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids (halibut, salmon, and tuna) help support the health of your eyes. Other foods to include are carrots, citrus fruits (lemons, oranges, grapefruit), and nuts and seeds (such as walnuts, flax seed, and almonds).

Sources:
Centers for Disease Control ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov))
National Eye Institute ([nei.nih.gov](https://www.nei.nih.gov))
Medical News Today ([medicalnewstoday.com](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com))
John Hopkins Medicine ([hopkinsmedicine.org](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org))

Know Your Family History

Learn from family members and relatives whether there is a family history of eye diseases, be aware of your risk and take preventive measures. Although many eye conditions develop as a person ages, it is important to catch them early when vision loss can be prevented or delayed.



Digital Detox

Protecting Your Eyes from Screen Strain

In today's digital age, our eyes are constantly bombarded with screens from computers, smartphones, and tablets. Excessive screen time can lead to digital eye strain, marked by symptoms like fatigue, blurred vision, headaches, and dry eyes. To combat digital eye strain and protect your vision, follow these tips:

Adjust Your Screen Settings

Adjust the brightness and contrast of your screen to match your environment, and use a font size that is easy to read.

Practice the 20-20-20 Rule

Every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break from your screen and focus your gaze 20 feet away.

Blink Frequently

Staring at screens can reduce your blink rate, so make a conscious effort to blink regularly.

Take Regular Breaks

Step away from screens for short periods throughout the day and engage in activities that do not involve screens.



Create a Healthy Workspace

Ensure proper lighting and position your computer at eye level and at a comfortable distance.

Consider Blue Light Glasses

Blue light emitted by digital devices can contribute to eye strain. Blue light glasses can help reduce the impact of blue light on your eyes. There are a range of places to get blue light glasses, both online and in retail stores, and those wearing prescription glasses can opt to have blue light lenses added.