

PROTECTING YOUR VISION: How Health Affects Eyesight



It's easy to take vision for granted. But there are many health issues, such as diabetes and smoking, that create problems for your eyes. The National Eye Institute expects the number of people with visual impairment or blindness in the United States to double to more than 8 million by 2050, and another 16.4 million will have correctable vision difficulties such as near- or farsightedness.¹

However, with regular preventive screenings along with taking care of and protecting your eyes, the future of your eye health is looking good!

Get Checked!²

The American Optometric Association suggests that children from age 6 to 18 should have an eye exam every two years, after an initial exam prior to starting first grade. Adults age 18 to 60 should have an eye exam every two years, then annually from age 61 and up.

Consult with your doctor on how often you may need to have eye checkups, based on your individual health risks.

What are the risks for vision problems?

- Have diabetes, hypertension, or a family history of eye problems such as glaucoma
- Have a job that is visually demanding or presents a physical danger to your sight
- Wear contact lenses
- Have had eye surgery

Tips to Help Support Healthy Vision³



Get an Eye Exam

Get a dilated eye exam. This lets the doctor get a better look inside your eye.



Eat Leafy Greens

Eat plenty of dark leafy greens such as spinach and kale.



Maintain a Healthy Weight

Obesity can cause diabetes, which affects blood vessels, including those in your eyes.



Quit Smoking

The CDC has linked smoking with macular degeneration and cataracts, conditions which affect vision.⁴



Wear Sunglasses

Wear sunglasses that block 99-100 percent of the sun's ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation.



Watch Out for Digital Eye Strain

Between our computers, phones, and televisions, we look at many bright glowing screens throughout the day. This can cause Digital Eye Strain, which may result in headaches, blurred vision, dry eyes, and neck and shoulder pain.

To prevent this digital strain, remember the **20-20-20 Rule**. After 20 minutes of screen viewing, take 20 seconds to focus on something 20 feet away.

Check your screen. A computer screen should be about 4 or 5 inches below eye level, measured from the center of the screen, and 20-28 inches from your eyes.⁵



See the Signs⁶

Consult with your doctor or health care professional who may refer you to an eye care specialist if you are experiencing any of the following:

- Decreased vision
- Eye pain
- Drainage or redness
- Double vision
- Flashes of light
- Floaters (tiny specks that seem to float before your eyes)
- Circles or halos around light sources

For more information on protecting your vision, visit the following resources:

American Optometric Association

aao.org/eyecare-america

National Eye Institute

nei.nih.gov/healthyeyes/eyehealthtips

Visit **ahealthyme.com** and be sure to sign up for an ahealthyme account!

1. nei.nih.gov/news/pressrelease/visual_impairment_cases_2050

2. aao.org/patients-and-public/caring-for-your-vision/comprehensive-eye-and-vision-examination/recommended-examination-frequency-for-pediatric-patients-and-adults

3. cdc.gov/media/matte/2012/08-healthy-vision.pdf

4. cdc.gov/features/smoking-eyesight

5. aao.org/patients-and-public/caring-for-your-vision/protecting-your-vision/computer-vision-syndrome

6. cdc.gov/media/matte/2012/08-healthy-vision.pdf



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