

VISION AWARENESS

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We all want good vision. This starts with understanding what we need to do to keep our eyes healthy. First let's look at some common vision myths.

COMMON VISION MYTHS AND TRUTHS:



Myth: Reading in dim light damages your eyes.

Fact: Reading in dim light causes eye fatigue - but not damage.



Myth: There's nothing you can do about preventing vision loss.

Fact: Regular eye exams and proper safety eyewear can save your sight.



Myth: Eye exams are only necessary if you're having problems.

Fact: Everyone should follow a proper eye health program that includes regular eye exams.



WHAT IS A PROPER EYE HEALTH PROGRAM?

First, eye health starts with knowing your family history. Some eye diseases are genetic. For example, if you have parents or grandparents with macular degeneration, you are at an increased risk of having it yourself. According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the risk of glaucoma is 4 to 9 times higher than average if a family member has it. Knowing your family's eye history lets your eye care provider know what diseases you are more likely to develop. Also, early detection can let them treat any problems earlier, which can prevent vision loss.

Second, know what you can do for eye health.



Eat a diet with a wide variety of fruits and vegetables to help your eyes to stay healthy and to protect against diseases that cause vision loss. A diet that is low in saturated fats (animal fats) is best for eye health.



Just as exercise is good for your heart, it is also good for preventing eye disease. Try to get 30 minutes at least 5 days a week of cardio exercise. This can be walking, running, aerobics, dancing, push mowing the yard, or any activity that gets your heart rate up.



If you smoke, stop. You are at a higher risk of some eye diseases, such as cataracts. Dry eye can also be caused by smoke, even secondhand smoke.



For those who use a computer all day, minimize the risk to your vision. Sit with your screen at least an arm's length away. Keep your monitor's brightness the same as the surrounding area. Make sure to blink frequently. Follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. This helps relieve eye strain.



Working in jobs like construction or jobs where chemicals are used, an injury can happen. Even at home, when doing improvements or some hobbies, a risk of eye injury is possible. Wearing eye protection such as goggles, or face shields can prevent many eye injuries.



Some sports that use fast-moving balls or rackets can cause an eye injury. Just like at work, proper protection is important. Wear eye gear or safety glasses to protect your eyes.



The sun can cause eye damage. The best way to protect your eyes is to wear appropriate sunglasses. Sunglasses should block 99-100% of both UVA and UVB. Once you have sunglasses, make sure to wear them on sunny and cloudy days. UV light gets through the clouds and can cause eye damage.



Keep any chronic health problems, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, under proper control. Both cause damage to the blood vessels in the eyes, which leads to vision loss and even blindness. See your health care provider as instructed, and follow all instructions they give you, including when and how to take your meds.



Finally, see your eye doctor regularly. Eye exams not only help correct vision; they also help prevent vision loss and can detect some health conditions before you know you have them.

SOURCES:

• <https://preventblindness.org/common-eye-myths/>

• <https://www.aaopt.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/healthy-lifestyle-now-good-vision-later>

• <https://www.cedars-sinai.org/health-library/diseases-and-conditions/c/computer-vision-syndrome.html#:~:text=Digital%20eye%20strain%20is%20a%20group%20of%20related%20eye%20and,problems%20are%20a%20major%20cause.>