

May Is Healthy Vision Month: Take Care of Your Eyes!

Healthy vision can help keep you safe each day. Taking care of your eyes should be a priority just like eating healthy and being physically active. People with vision problems are more likely to have diabetes, poor hearing, heart problems, high blood pressure, lower back pain and strokes, as well as have increased risk for falls, injury and depression. Just 21.5% of older Americans without vision problems reported fair to poor health.

There are nine ways you can help protect your vision according to the CDC.

1. Get regular comprehensive dilated eye exams
2. Know your family's eye health history because some conditions are hereditary.
3. Eat right to protect your sight.
4. Maintain a healthy weight.
5. Wear protective eyewear when playing sports or being active.
6. Quit smoking or never start.
7. Wear sunglasses that block 99-100% of ultraviolet A and B radiation.
8. Wash your hands before taking out contact lenses and cleanse them.
9. Practice workplace eye safety.

You can also promote healthy vision by staying hydrated and getting enough sleep.

Looking at a computer or phone screen for an extended period of time can cause eye strain, blurry vision, focusing at a distance problems, dry eyes headaches, headaches as well as neck, back and shoulder pain. You may want to use computer glasses, move the screen so your eyes are level with the top of the monitor, use an anti-glare screen, use a comfortable and supportive chair, have your feet flat on the floor, use artificial tears if your eyes are dry and rest your eyes every 20 minutes.

WebMD Guidelines for taking care of your eyes includes eating well. Eat foods that have omega 3 fatty acids, lutein, zinc and vitamins C and E. These nutrients help defend against age-related vision problems like macular degeneration and cataracts. Foods that support healthy vision include:

1. Salmon, tuna and other oily fish
2. Green leafy vegetables including spinach, kale and collards
3. Eggs, nuts, beans and other nonmeat protein sources
4. Oranges and other citrus fruits or juices
5. Oysters and pork

You may want to consider wearing safety eyewear such as safety glasses or protective goggles when using hazardous or airborne materials on the job or at home. This is especially true when mowing the lawn, raking leaves and yard waste or working outside in windy conditions. Be proactive and protect your eyes!

Resources:

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Vision Health Initiative (VHI)

Hamptons Eye and Vision: March 2023 Is “Save Your Vision” Month