

Take care of your eyes

So truthfully, how often do you really pay attention to your eye health? Only when you realise you have to squint to see the TV or when your contacts start hurting, right?

Of the five senses, vision is probably the most taken for granted, and the least thought about. Although blindness is among the most common human fears, unfortunately, we generally don't prioritise eye care.

In love, your eyes may be the windows to your soul but in the medical world, they are the gateway to your health. Because the eye is the only place in the human body where neural tissue and blood vessels can directly be seen, an eye exam can uncover diabetes, high blood pressure, and even an autoimmune disease. Also, getting your eyes checked regularly will help to detect glaucoma and macular degeneration that could cause vision loss.

The good news is that according to the World Health Organisation, 80% of all vision impairment around the world can be prevented and even cured. And with proper care, people can ensure that their eyes perform well throughout their life. However, maintaining healthy vision is about more than simply getting regular vision screenings.

Here are some “eye-opening” tips for maintaining healthy eyesight:

- **Eat the right foods.** Feed your eyes by filling your plate with foods high in Omega-3 fatty acids, Vitamin C and E. These nutrients may also lower your chance of developing macular degeneration or cataracts. Green veggies, salmon, eggs and citrus fruits are a great place to start!
- **Ditch the cigarettes.** Do you think that lighting up could only harm your heart and lungs? Think again. Research has revealed that people who smoke are four times more likely to develop cataracts when compared to those who do not smoke.

- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight is directly linked to an increase in your risk of developing chronic conditions such as diabetes, which in turn can affect your vision. Research indicates that regular exercise severely reduces the risk of glaucoma onset.
- **Limit alcohol intake.** Studies have shown that people who abuse alcohol are more prone to a condition known as optic atrophy.
- **Limit screen time.** Wear anti-glare lenses and glasses when constantly in front of the computer. Take frequent screen breaks; after 20 minutes stare at something else for 20 seconds.
- **Protect your eyes from the sun's rays.** Invest in a decent pair of sunglasses that will block out 99-100% of UVA and UVB rays.
- **Get regular eye screenings and be aware of your family's eye history.** Optometrists recommend that most people have an eye test every two years. Not all eye-related problems are hereditary, but some of them are. Ensure that your ophthalmologist or optometrist is aware of all the facts.

Take care of your eyes every day by simply incorporating a few lifestyle habits to your daily routine.

When you consider that over 80% of the information that you take in from the world is through your eyes, the importance of vision health cannot be overlooked.

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