



INSIGHTS



Help Your Child Avoid Computer Vision Syndrome



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According to national estimates, 98% of households in the United States with kids under the age of 8 have some type of mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet computer. This percentage mirrors the rate of U.S. homes that possess a television. With so many households having these devices, it's not surprising that kids spend many hours a day viewing digital displays. Need proof? Just look at the statistics in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Digital Viewing Averages in Kids

Phase	Description
Age Group	Average Hours of Digital Viewing
<8 years	>2 hours
8-10 years	6 hours
11-14 years	9 hours

Growing Concerns

The rapid increase in digital device use by children has come with increasing concerns about long screen times and the potential impact on developing nearsightedness. A study from the National Eye Institute found that the prevalence of nearsightedness in Americans has increased by more than 66% over the past 30 years. The time frame of this rise in nearsightedness parallels the increasing hours of digital device use.

Equally concerning is the fact that eye doctors are increasingly seeing chil-

dren with symptoms of computer vision syndrome, a condition characterized by a combination of eye strain, headaches, and fatigue-related discomfort and posture problems. The high-energy blue light emitted by screens of digital devices appears to contribute to symptoms of computer vision syndrome. Eye doctors are urging caution because today's children will be exposed to far more blue light from digital devices than previous generations.

Be Proactive!

The greatest risk for progressing to nearsightedness takes place in childhood. You can help your child avoid computer vision syndrome by scheduling an eye exam, especially if they're having symptoms like headaches, eye strain, and posture problems. Addressing these issues early can relieve your child's discomfort and reduce their risk of vision problems or eye health concerns later in life.

In addition to scheduling an eye exam, try the following to decrease risks for computer vision syndrome:

1. Take frequent "eye breaks." When using digital devices, follow the "20-20-20 rule." Every 20 minutes, stop looking at your screen for at least 20 seconds and focus on something at least 20 feet away. This relaxes eye muscles and prevents fatigue that leads to eye strain and headaches.

2. Stretch. Have your child put down digital devices and stand up and stretch. This can relieve muscle tension that causes eye, head, neck, and overall body discomfort.

3. Go outdoors. Spending more time outdoors will get your child moving and relieve tension associated with computer vision syndrome.

If your child already wears glasses, ask your eye doctor about photochromic lenses, anti-reflective coating and blue light filtering lenses. These products can increase visual comfort and decrease exposure to blue light both indoors and outside the home.



EYE HEALTH

Get the Eye Stye Facts



A stye is an infection in the eyelid that causes a tender, red bump near the edge of the eyelid. The infection can occur at the base of an eyelash or within one of the small oil glands within the eyelid. Here are 7 facts about eye styes:

1. Spot the early signs. The first signs of styes are pain, redness, swelling, and tenderness.

2. Don't expect vision problems. Styes shouldn't affect your ability to see.

3. Know the cause: Staphylococcal bacteria cause styes.

4. Avoid spreading to others. Styes are contagious; keep eyes and hands clean and don't share linens or towels.

5. Let styes heal. Alternatively, use hot compresses for 10-15 minutes 3-4 times a day over several days.

6. Never "pop" styes. Allow styes to open on their own or ask your eye doctor for help.

7. Look for other eye problems. With a stye, you may have frequent watering in the affected eye, increased light sensitivity, and/or a foreign body sensation.



EYE-Q

Q: How long is the lifespan of an eyelash?

See answer on back.

Coping With Vision Loss



Coping With Vision Loss

Age-related eye diseases can cause permanent vision loss for many older people, but this doesn't mean that someone with visual disabilities can no longer have an active, rewarding, and fulfilling life. A key strategy to overcome challenges with vision loss is to seek assistance from available resources for the visually impaired so that you get the most from the vision you have. This includes taking extra precautions to safeguard your surroundings, having plans for transportation, and getting support from others.

Prepare the Home

Many organizations throughout the country provide low vision services. A low vision specialist can assess if simple changes, such as using special magnifiers and large-print books, playing cards, and implementing the use of labels to identify something unfamiliar. Often, these groups offer a trained professional who will come to your home and evaluate if there are any unnecessary hazards that might increase risks for injuries. They can help:

- Reduce clutter
- Optimize furniture placement
- Clear walking paths and stairwells
- Fix partially obstructed doorways

When assessing the home, it's important to check the lighting inside and around the home. Oftentimes, increasing the number and brightness of lamps and overhead lighting can make a big difference in safety. Dim or harsh lighting can be replaced with long-last-

ing, energy efficient LED bulbs. Light bulbs that emit "warm white" or "soft white" light are better than other bulbs because they're more comfortable to the eyes and cause less glare.

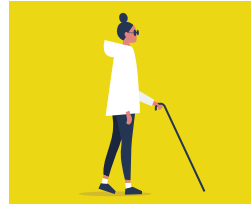
Hit the Road

While some people are fortunate to have family and friends who are willing to drive them to stores and doctor appointments at the drop of a hat, others will need to plan for their transportation needs. Look into public transportation options in the event you no longer can see well enough to drive safely or require rides from others. In some cases, charitable organizations offer transportation services for the visually disabled.

Get Assistance

A little help from other people—beyond friends and family—can go a long way for anyone dealing with significant permanent vision loss. Look into organizations in the community where people with vision loss can meet, build friendships, and share experiences with others living with the same issues. These relationships reinforce that no one is alone when coping with vision loss. They can also help with additional tips and techniques for living independently.

If you think you or a family member or friend with vision loss could benefit from additional emotional support, talk to your eye doctor or low vision specialist. Another option is to ask for a referral to a licensed psychologist or therapist who has experience helping people cope with vision loss and other disabilities. Additional help is out there!



Dry Eye After Menopause



Dry eye syndrome is common among older Americans, and research shows that woman older than 50 are at higher risk of dry eye than men of the same age. There are many possible causes of dry eye, including eye allergies and many environmental factors. If you're approaching menopause age and have dry eye syndrome, here are some actions you can take:

- Review all medications you take with your doctor because some may contribute to dry eye. There may be opportunities to use different treatments
- Ensure other aging and dry eye-related conditions (eg, rheumatoid arthritis and thyroid autoimmune disease) are adequately treated
- Hold off on laser vision correction surgery (eg, LASIK or PRK). These procedures can worsen dry eye

Your first step to getting relief is to schedule an appointment to with an eye doctor. Get a thorough evaluation of your eyes and discuss any dry eye symptoms you may have.



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EYE HEALTH



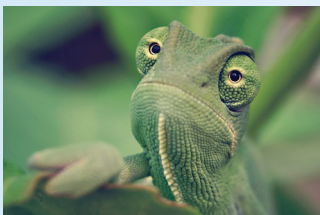
Eye Freckles & Sun-Related Vision Problems

Eye freckles are dark spots that appear on the iris. Research suggests that eye freckles could signify other problems relating to excessive sun exposure. A recent study found that people who spent a lot of time outdoors and developed these freckles were at higher risk for cataracts, macular degeneration, and other diseases relating to sunlight.

According to researchers, 3 factors were linked to a higher risk of developing eye freckles:

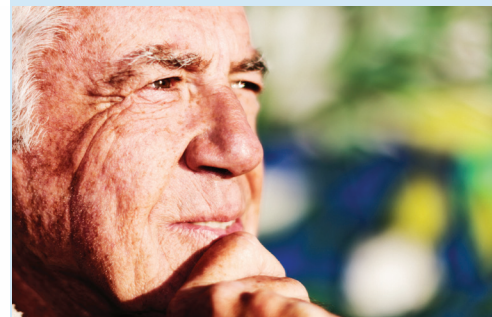
1. Being older
2. Having more sunburns
3. Having a history of severe sunburns that caused the skin to blister

Eye freckles were more common among people with light-colored eyes and those who weren't as good about wearing sunscreen and avoiding sun exposure. These freckles also tended to appear in the lower outer edge of the iris. If you have eye freckles, ask your eye doctor about what you can do to protect yourself from potential health problems.



EYE DROPS

Chameleons can move their eyes in two directions at once!



How Many Pairs of Glasses Do You Need?



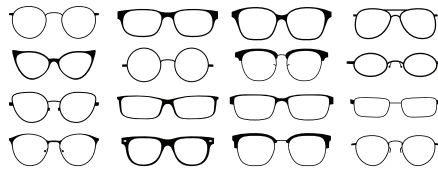
For people who wear eyeglasses, it's important to think about how many pairs you need. Beyond having a spare backup pair, there are other options to consider. Several factors play into these decisions, including your vision needs, vision insurance, and budget. Most people with vision problems will get prescription eyeglasses to correct their vision, but other specialty eye-wear can be helpful.

Sunglasses

Sunglasses are often thought of as a fashion accessory, but they accomplish much more than that. They're the first line of defense against damaging ultra-violet (UV) rays from the sun. Experts recommend everyone protect their eyes with good quality sunglasses to block out UV light. Prescription glasses can be made with tints and full UV protection.

Reading Glasses

After age 40, it's normal for people to start noticing that small print gets harder to read. Reading glasses, or "readers," might be an option if you don't require a prescription for progressive lenses or custom reading glasses. Reading glasses can help you see small print on maps, labels, your phone, or your computer. It may be prudent to consider several pairs of reading glasses for all the various activities that require magnification. It can also be helpful to have different prescriptions of progressing strengths for various activities. Weaker reading glasses might suit for certain things like the computer since it is further from your eyes when you view the screen.



Computer Glasses

With our increasing dependence on digital devices, a new category of vision problems has emerged called digital eye strain. Symptoms include dry and irritated eyes, blurred vision, light sensitivity, and headache. It's possible to use single vision lenses for computer glasses that are specially prescribed for the viewing distance you typically use. However, a better solution might be occupational progressive lenses that are designed specifically for digital devices and computer screens. For greater comfort, computer glasses should include anti-reflective coating. Many eye doctors also recommend including a blue light filtering component for further protection.

Sports Glasses

Thousands of people end up in the emergency room every year with sports related eye injuries. Sports glasses which include safety glasses and goggles, safety shields, and eye guards designed for a particular sport may offer protection from these injuries. Sports glasses are made with stronger materials and designed for ultimate impact resistance and durability. They're also designed for comfort, fit, and coverage to protect from various elements, such as sun, water, or wind.

What's Best for You?

Can one or more of these specialty eyewear options work for you? It depends on your lifestyle and other factors. If you're having trouble deciding, talk to your eye doctor and ask for recommendations about which lenses, coatings, and frames are the best choices for you. And be sure to ask if your vision insurance can help you save money on these other eyewear purchases.



6 Tips for Avoiding Eye Drop Mix-Ups



Many people confuse their eye-drop medications with ear drops or other medicines in similar dropper bottles. Below are 6 ways to avoid these mix-ups:

- 1. Keep all drops apart.** Do not store eye drops with any other drop bottles.
- 2. Keep drops in their boxes.** Leave all types of drops in their original boxes; the boxes often have pictures of an ear or eye, but not the bottles.
- 3. Know names and cap colors.** Learn the name and cap color of all drops you take. Talk to your doctor if you can't see your eye-drop bottles clearly enough.
- 4. Check your medicine out loud.** Read the dropper label out loud to avoid mistakes.
- 5. Take eye drops and other drops at different times.** This can reduce risks for mix ups.
- 6. Throw away leftover drops.** Dispose of any leftover drops once you are done. Fewer bottles means fewer chances to get mixed up.





Learn More About Contrast Sensitivity Testing



A contrast sensitivity test measures your ability to distinguish between light and dark. It's different from visual acuity testing during routine eye exams because it determines your ability to see in various situations in which your visual ability is reduced. This includes instances where there is low light, fog, or glare. Even if you have 20/20 visual acuity, you can have eye or health conditions that may make you feel like you're not seeing contrast well.

An Important Test

If you have low contrast sensitivity, you may have problems with night driving or difficulty seeing pedestrians walking alongside poorly lit streets. You might also notice your eyes tire more easily when reading or watching television. Poor contrast sensitivity can increase your risk of falling if you can't see a step from a curb onto similarly colored pavement.

Low contrast sensitivity can be a symptom of certain eye conditions or diseases, such as cataracts, glaucoma, or diabetic retinopathy. Changes in contrast sensitivity also can occur after LASIK, PRK, and other types of refractive surgery.

Contrast sensitivity testing often isn't included in a routine eye exam. Your eye doctor might perform the test because of a specific visual complaint or because it's suspected you have a condition affecting your ability to discern contrast. If you need a contrast sensitivity test, it likely will be given after a standard visual acuity test and before the pupils are dilated.

Ways to Test

The Pelli Robson contrast sensitivity chart is often used to test contrast sensitivity. Similar to a Snellen visual acuity chart, the Pelli Robson chart uses horizontal lines of capital letters. However, instead of the letters getting smaller on each successive line, the contrast of the letters relative to the chart background decreases with each line.

Other more sophisticated devices can also be used to test contrast sensitivity. These devices typically use targets called sine-wave gratings, which have several fuzzy parallel bars of light and dark. The bars vary in width and contrast from target to target. This testing is done to give a more thorough evaluation.

What's Next?

Results from contrast sensitivity testing can help determine if you have vision errors called high-order aberrations or a different problem that can be corrected with special eyewear or surgery. If you have low contrast sensitivity, you might be advised to wear corrective lenses with a yellow filter to improve your ability to discern contrast. If you need prescription eyeglasses, many people will see better in low-light conditions when wearing lenses that include anti-reflective coating. Other treatments are also available to improve contrast sensitivity and night vision. The only way to know for sure if you have normal contrast sensitivity is to see an eye doctor. Schedule an appointment today!



Even Nerf Guns Put Eyes at Risk



Eye experts recommend avoiding the purchase and use of projectile-firing toys due to safety concerns. Projectiles can cause serious eye injuries, including eye scratches, bleeding, cataracts, and even permanent vision loss. Conventional wisdom suggests that Nerf darts would be a safe alternative to other projectiles because they're soft. However, a recent report found that people can still suffer from serious vision injuries from these toys.

The report looked at 3 patient cases and found that these people experienced days or weeks of pain and blurred vision resulting from injuries from Nerf darts. Of note, other darts that are similar to Nerf may be even more dangerous because the material they're made of may be harder than the Nerf brand. Findings of the report underscore the serious nature of eye injuries during playtime. If a child is playing with Nerf toys, everyone around the child—even adults—should wear eye protection to block flying objects from entering their eyes.

We all see the world in different colors
One in every 12 males has some degree of "Color Blindness".



Which Color Contacts Are Best for You?



Colored contact lenses let you change your eye color and create a look that can be subtle, bold, or somewhere in between. These lenses are available in prescription or plano form. Prescription color contacts can correct nearsightedness and farsightedness, while also changing your eye color. Plano contacts have no lens power for vision correction, but they still require a prescription from your eye doctor. These lenses are worn strictly for cosmetic purposes to change eye color.

Most colored contact lenses are designed to mimic the natural look of the iris. There are 2 different kinds:

1. Enhancement tint. This is a solid but see-through tint that's a little darker than a visibility tint and often makes eye color more vibrant

2. Opaque tint. This non-transparent tint can change eye color completely

Color contacts with opaque tints come in a wide variety of colors. Costume or theatrical contact lenses are opaque tints designed for temporary use. If you want to change your eye color only for special occasions, daily disposable color contacts are a great option.

Selecting Your Color

The contact lens color that suits you best depends on many factors, such as your hair color and skin tone. Ultimately, it depends on the look you want to achieve. For light eyes, you may want to choose an enhancement tint that defines the edges of your iris and deepens your natural color. For dark eyes, opaque colored tints tend to be good choices.



Important Considerations

Before you choose colored contacts, be aware that there will be some occasions where the colored portion of the lenses might slide a little over the pupil, creating a less-than-natural appearance. Also, the size of your pupils constantly changes to handle varying light conditions. Sometimes, your pupils may be larger than the clear center of your color lenses, which could affect your vision.

Table: The Color Contacts "Do's and Don'ts"

DO	DON'T
Care for your contact lenses properly	Share your contact lenses
Have fun with your new look!	Wear your contacts if you develop sore, irritated, or red eyes

The good news is colored contact lenses are generally safe when used as prescribed by your doctor. Be aware of what should and shouldn't be done with these contacts (Table). You will need to see an eye doctor for a proper contact lens exam and fitting and to get information on how and when to change or replace the lenses. Work with your eye doctor to find colored contacts that are best suited to your personality and desired appearance.

Don't purchase contact lenses that have not been prescribed to you by your eye doctor. All contact lenses, even color cosmetic contacts should be prescribed and monitored by your doctor. Serious complications can result from wearing ill fitting, or poor quality contact lens substitutes found online and at unregulated retailers.



Eye Injuries From Falls on the Rise

Common vision problems like cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration can cause a person to misstep and fall. Over the past 13 years, the hospitalization rate for eye trauma increased by 18%, according to a study. Most of this increase was due to falls occurring in people older than 65. Researchers said the trend of increasing rates of falls seen is likely to continue to escalate as people live longer and the elderly population increases.

The good news is there are simple things you can do to keep yourself and your loved ones safe. To reduce risks for falling, people aged 65 and older should have their eyes checked annually. Their glasses should be updated to make sure they're seeing as well as possible. At home, measures should be taken to ensure there is good lighting throughout the home. Keeping a house brightly lit can help avoid tripping on objects that are hard to see.

Answer to Eye-Q (from page 1)

A: 5 months

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