



JOAG Tip of the Month

Nov 2020

Healthy Eyes

Dr. Seuss has a popular children's book, "The Eye Book", that repeats the statement, "Hooray for eyes." There is no doubt we agree that our eyes are valuable, but are we treating our eyes the best we can? For many of us this pandemic has increased our screen time, potentially leading to a common eye problem of eyestrain.

Eye strain may happen to all of us at one point or another in our lives but may present differently for each of us. Some may experience a feeling of tired eyes, blurred vision, watery eyes, squinting, muscle twitching, headaches, or a dry or burning sensation. COVID-19 has created a virtual environment where most of us, including our children, are experiencing more digital eye strain than ever before. So what causes eye strain to happen?²

Focusing on something like a book or computer screen for extended periods of time.

- Needing glasses or not wearing them
- Outdated prescription for contacts or glasses
- Trying to focus your eyes in a dark environment
- Switching your eyes between distances
- Hot or cold air from a fan or vent blowing in your face
- Working in improper lighting, too bright or too dark

Eye strain does not injure the eye but is often uncomfortable and concerning for people. Try these tips to help prevent eye strain⁴:

- The 20-20-20 Rule: Every 20 minutes, shift your eyes to look at an object as least 20 feet away, for at least 20 seconds
- Use artificial tears when your eyes feel dry
- Remember to blink
- Wear 100% UV blocking sunglasses when in sunlight for any length of time
- Adjust your computer so you sit 20-40" from it, and gaze slightly down at the screen
- Change brightness and contrast settings
- Switch to night mode if available
- Adjust fans or air vents to point away from your face
- Wear prescribed glasses or contacts

An eye exam may be needed and can help detect eye diseases like cataracts, glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, or eye infections. Eye exams can also find refractive errors like nearsightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism. They are recommended every 1-2 years if you are over age 40 or have corrected vision. Eye exams are recommended annually for certain health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

Check out the American Academy of Ophthalmology (www.aaopt.org) for more information.

References:

1. <https://www.aaopt.org/eye-health/symptoms-list>
2. <https://www.aaopt.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-eye-strain>
3. https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/components_monitors.html
4. <https://www.aaopt.org/eye-health/tips-prevention-list>