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Health & Wellness

Highlights

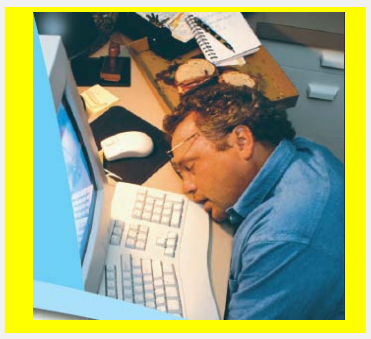
WELCOME TO THIS MONTH'S EDITION OF **HEALTH & WELLNESS HIGHLIGHTS**. IN THIS ISSUE, WE WILL BE HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF:

Healthy Vision & Eye Care

9 Signs That You Need an Eye Exam

There are some signs and symptoms that should send you to the eye doctor for an eye exam — even if you aren't due for one. If you experience any of the nine symptoms below, you should schedule an eye exam as soon as possible, and in some cases, immediate medical attention is required.

- 👁️ **Sudden Blurry Vision or Problems Focusing** Sudden blurry vision or focus problems can be a sign of a larger health issue and should always be taken seriously. If the blurry vision comes and goes, or is limited to one eye, you should schedule an exam with an optometrist or ophthalmologist as soon as possible.
- 👁️ **Sudden appearance of visual disturbances such as floaters, flashes of light, or obstruction of vision.** Sudden onset of any of these visual disturbances could be a sign of a serious, vision-threatening disorder such as a retinal detachment, retinal tear, or retinal hole. Anyone who experiences these signs must seek *immediate* (within 24 hours, or sooner) medical attention by an optometrist, ophthalmologist or emergency room physician.
- 👁️ **Gradual Blurring of Vision** This is the type of vision degradation that gradually happens over time. If you are noticing that you're moving a book or the computer screen further away from your eyes than you used to, it's probably time to get an eye exam. Same goes if you notice yourself sitting closer to the television or bring objects closer to you to read.
- 👁️ **Headaches** Frequent headaches can be a sign of a vision problem. Changes in vision take place slowly and are often imperceptible to the patient at first. However, headaches can be one of the early warning signs of a change in vision.
- 👁️ **Eye Pain or Eye Fatigue/Strain** Having some infrequent eye pain or eye strain isn't usually a big problem. Everything from the amount of sleep you're getting to seasonal allergies, or the cold or flu can cause temporary eye pain or fatigue. However, if you experience ongoing eye pain for more than a few days, or if you experience ongoing eye pain with eye movements, it's a good idea to get it checked out.
- 👁️ **Squinting** Frequent squinting is the quintessential sign that it's probably time for an eye exam. We squint when we're having difficulties seeing because the act of squinting reduces extraneous light entering the eye and reduces light scattering, improving vision. This is often one of the first signs in children that they may need eyeglasses. In addition, squinting coupled with an eye turn, more commonly called a "lazy eye", is a definite red flag that a comprehensive vision exam is in order.
- 👁️ **Sensitivity to Light** A sudden onset of sensitivity to light can be a sign that you should get an eye exam. Light sensitivity can be a symptom of a number of disorders or eye diseases.
- 👁️ **An Eye Infection** If you experience swelling of the eyelids, itchiness, redness, a pink discoloration of the whites of your eyes, and/or discharge, you may have an eye infection.
- 👁️ **If You Haven't Had an Eye Exam in the Past Two Years** If you haven't had a full eye exam in the past two years, you should schedule one — especially if you are over the age of 40.



Is Your Workplace a Sight For Sore Eyes

You rub your eyes, squint and try everything you can to make them feel better. Could the burning, watering, blurred vision, even headaches be caused by eyestrain from your computer screen?

Adopting these habits can help:

- 👁️ Change the pace by getting up and moving at least once every two hours.
- 👁️ Make a conscious effort to blink more often, or consider using over-the-counter artificial tears.
- 👁️ Get appropriate eyewear that is fitted for computer work.
- 👁️ Adjust your monitor about 18 to 30 inches from your eyes.
- 👁️ Check the lighting and reduce glare.

Source: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research



Protect your vision with
regular eye exams



Sun Safety: More Than Meets The Eye

We hear a lot about the dangers of the sun and protecting our skin from its harmful rays. But guarding our eyes is also important. Like the skin, our eyes can get sunburned too. Long-term contact with the sun can lead to cataracts and increase the risk of vision loss. Anytime you are in the sun, consider wearing sunglasses that:

- 👁️ Screen out 75 to 90 percent of visible light;
- 👁️ Block 99 to 100 percent of the sun's UV-A and UV-B rays;
- 👁️ Are matched in color and free of distortion; and
- 👁️ Are gray so that you can see colors correctly.

Nearly 61 million adults in the U.S. are at high risk of having serious vision problems. But only half of them had an eye exam within the past 12 months. Many eye diseases, such as glaucoma and those related to diabetes and aging, have no warning signs until it's too late. Be sure to get your vision checked with regular eye exam.

Be selective:

Sunglasses are more than a fashion statement. Wearing the right ones can help you keep an eye on sun safety and protect your vision for years to come.

Sources: American Optometric Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

When Cataracts Cloud Your Vision

Cataracts are common as people age — but that doesn't mean you should just sit back and wait for your eyesight to deteriorate.

In a normal eye, the role of the clear lens is to focus light onto the back of the eye, where nerves perceive images and transmit them to the brain. But when cataracts form, they cloud the lens, obscuring and distorting the light coming into the eye, causing vision to become blurry and poor.

Cataracts are generally an age-related eye condition. In fact, more than 50 percent of Americans 80 and older either have cataracts or have already undergone cataract surgery. Many people with cataracts also have other eye diseases, such as glaucoma or age-related macular degeneration.

How and Why Cataracts Develop

Age-related eye cataracts occur in two ways:

- 👁️ Clumps of protein form in the lens, causing it to become cloudy. The clouding cuts back the amount of light reaching the retina and it can become so bad that vision blurs. Most age-related cataracts develop in this manner.
- 👁️ The lens grows dull over time, with a yellow or brown color developing in the normally clear lens. Vision takes on a brownish tint that can eventually make it difficult to read, perceive fine details, or distinguish some colors.

Researchers have linked certain behaviors to the development of cataracts. These include smoking, drinking, and overexposure to sunlight.

Eye cataracts can also develop due to these factors:

- 👁️ Surgery for other eye problems, like glaucoma
- 👁️ Health conditions like diabetes
- 👁️ Eye injuries, though it may take years to develop cataracts after the initial trauma
- 👁️ Exposure to radiation



Source: Everyday Health Media, LLC

What Causes Dry Eye?

Age is the most common risk factor for dry eyes. In fact, dry eye is considered a normal part of aging. Nearly 5 million Americans 50 or older have dry eye, including more than 3 million women and more than 1.5 million men. Dry eye tends to become more common in women following menopause, and women who go through premature menopause are more likely to have eye damage from dry eye.

Other causes of dry eye include:

- 👁️ **Medications.** Certain types of drugs can cause dry eye. These include antihistamines, decongestants, antidepressants, and blood pressure medications.
- 👁️ **Medical conditions.** Eye or eyelid infections and diseases that cause inflammation can contribute to dry eye by affecting tear production, as can allergies. People with diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and thyroid problems are also at increased risk for dry eye. In addition, vitamin overuse or deficiency can be a contributing factor.
- 👁️ **Environmental conditions.** Tears may evaporate more quickly when eyes are exposed to smoke, dry air, or wind — likely resulting in dry eye. Staring at a computer screen or television also can cause dry eye if you unconsciously start blinking less frequently.
- 👁️ **Eyesight correction.** Long-term contact lenses use can cause dry eye. People who have undergone laser vision correction also could experience dry eye because of a change in the shape of the cornea, which may have an effect on the spread of tears across the cornea.



Sources: Everyday Health Media, LLC

Dry eye can and should be treated for the health and comfort of your eyes.

Dry Eye: When Tears Don't Do Their Job

Teardrops serve an essential function for your eyes — they keep them moist and clean and provide them with essential nutrients. But when your eyes don't produce enough, you may develop a condition known as dry eye.

Tears aren't just for crying. They are a vital part of maintaining healthy eyesight, always acting to moisturize and lubricate your corneas. If something happens to affect the amount or quality of the teardrops you produce, you could wind up with itchy, scratchy, aching eyes — symptoms of a condition known as dry eye syndrome.

The cornea is the dome-shaped invisible surface covering the parts of the eye that take in light and control vision — the iris and the pupil. The cornea protects those crucial eyesight mechanisms from outside contaminants like dust, germs, and debris. Because it covers the light-perceiving portions of the eye, the cornea is made of clear tissue. That means it contains no blood vessels to provide it nourishment or protect it from infection.

Instead, the cornea receives its nutrition from tears. Every time you blink, tears created by the lacrimal gland spread across your eyeballs. These tears act to lubricate the entire outer surface of the eyeball and keep your corneas clean and healthy. Tears also help wash away foreign matter that might damage the cornea, keep the cornea moist, and reduce the risk of eye infections. In emergency situations, like when an eyelash or dust particle lands on your eye, tear production increases,

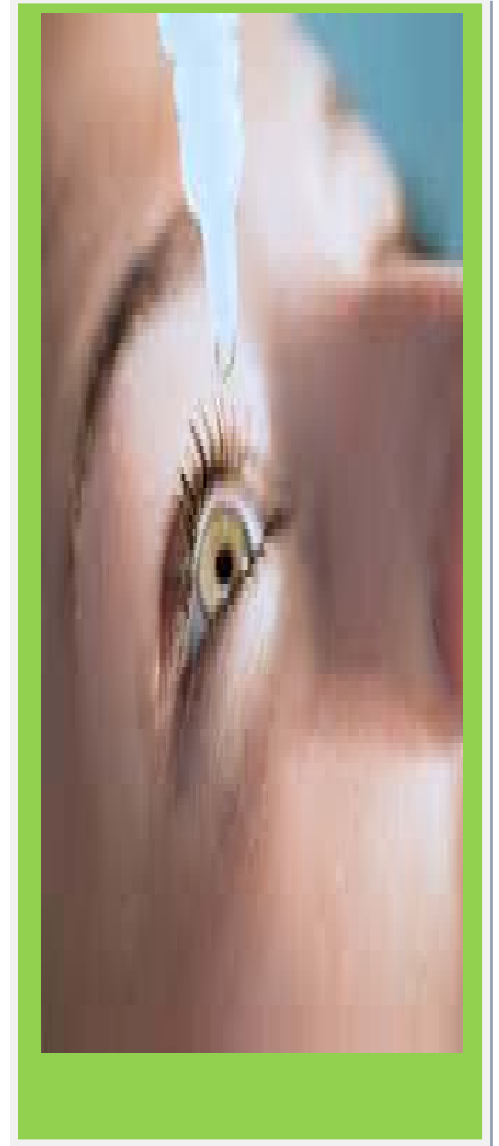
Dry Eye: When You're Not Producing Enough Tears

Dry eye syndrome occurs when:

- 👁️ **Not enough tears are produced.** For various reasons, including inflammation of the lacrimal glands, you don't produce enough tears to keep your corneas properly fed and protected.
- 👁️ **Tears of insufficient quality are produced.** Your tears contain a combination of oil, water, and mucus. The oil in tears works to "seal" the tears in and help prevent evaporation before the corneas have been fed and lubricated. Mucus works to make sure the tears spread evenly across the eye. If you are not producing enough oil or mucus, your tears may not be able to do their best at protecting the corneas.

Symptoms of dry eye include:

- 👁️ A burning or stinging sensation in the eye
- 👁️ A gritty feeling, as though something is in your eye
- 👁️ Pain and irritation in your eye
- 👁️ Blurred vision
- 👁️ Eye fatigue, including the inability to read or work on a computer for extended periods



Source: Everyday Health Media, LLC

Healthy Recipe

Berry Yogurt Popsicles

Layers of mashed red cherries, blackberries and white Greek yogurt make for a healthier, lower sugar version of store-bought treats. Berries are rich in phytochemicals like anthocyanins and ellagic acid, compounds that counter inflammation and act as antioxidants. This recipe is easy to follow and a great activity to do with kids on summer vacation..

Makes 12 paper cup popsicles.

Per serving: 69 calories, 0 g total fat (0 g saturated fat), 12 g carbohydrate, 5 g protein, 1 g dietary fiber, 18 mg sodium



Ingredients:

- 👁️ 1 ½ cup pitted fresh or frozen cherries
- 👁️ ½ cup fresh or frozen blackberries
- 👁️ 1 tbsp honey
- 👁️ 24 oz. vanilla Greek yogurt
- 👁️ 12 (3 oz.) paper cups
- 👁️ 12 popsicle sticks

Directions:

1. In small mixing bowl mash cherries and berries. Drizzle on honey and mix together.
2. In paper cups, layer alternating spoonfuls of yogurt and fruit until full. Place Popsicle stick or plastic spoon in each cup. Freeze.
3. When ready to serve, tear paper cup off Popsicle and enjoy.



Mission In Motion

Our mission is to promote health awareness and to encourage healthy lifestyles.

Upcoming Events

August 10 – August 14 – Open Enrollment
Central Fire Station

****Please get with your Director for the department schedule.****



Noemi Munguia
Nereyda Peña
Catherine N. Hernandez
Anais Chapa

Human Resources Director
Benefits Coordinator
Human Resources Coordinator
Insurance Benefits Specialist