



Eye Care

GUIDE

Keeping Your Eyes Healthy

A poor sense of vision can be a nuisance and may even be dangerous if not treated properly. Poor vision could lead to delayed reaction time in situations that require immediate reaction to ensure your well-being.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that about 14 million Americans ages 12 or older experience visual impairment. Learning how you can protect your vision or even correct it is critical to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

YOUR DIET MATTERS

You may not realize how much of an impact your diet has on your eyes. Many Americans consider a healthy diet as a way to keep their weight and heart health in check, but since your eyes also rely on small arteries to supply them with oxygen and vitamins, a good diet has a positive effects on vision.

Keeping your diet high in omega-3 acids, vitamin C and leafy greens will provide your eyes with the nutrients they need. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends that you make fresh fish, kale and oranges major parts of your diet to provide your eyes with the healthy nutrients they need.

EYE PROTECTION

The sun is not only harmful to your skin; it also can promote the development of cataracts. Wearing sunglasses can prevent retinal damage by protecting your fragile eyelid skin. Be sure to find sunglasses that



block 100 percent of both UV-A and UV-B rays.

The AAO estimates that there are 2.5 million eye injuries in the U.S. each year. Wear the proper eye protection during sports, gardening or home repairs.

EYE EXAMS

The AAO also recommends that adults schedule an eye exam at the age of 40, even if there are no signs of vision impairment. Experts say this is the time when early signs of disease or vision changes

begin. Schedule a baseline exam to help identify early signs of eye disease.

Knowing your family history can give you an eye health advantage before you reach 40. For instance, if your family has a history of diabetes, blood

pressure or eye disease you should see an ophthalmologist as soon as you notice a decline in your vision.

Catching vision problems early will make it easier for treatment to correct these issues.



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Is LASIK Right for You?

If you have grown tired of your eye glasses or the high maintenance of contact lenses, you may have considered LASIK surgery. Laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis (LASIK) is a procedure that uses a laser to reshape your cornea to correct eye ailments. If you are near- or far-sighted or are suffering from a certain vision problem, LASIK may be the solution.

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, LASIK was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 1998. Since then, this treatment has become extremely popular in the United States due to its high success rate and low risk of complications.

BEFORE SURGERY

Before you can be considered a good candidate for LASIK, you will need to make

an appointment for an eye evaluation. After a thorough eye exam, your doctor will determine if LASIK is right for you or if you should consider an alternative.

Stop wearing contact lenses a few weeks prior to your LASIK evaluation. Contact lenses cause a change in the shape of your cornea, and since LASIK focuses on reshaping your cornea, it should be in its natural state to prevent poor surgical plan-

ning. Switch to glasses before your exam to give your doctors an accurate measurement of your cornea.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING SURGERY?

According to the AAO, a typical LASIK surgery takes less than 30 minutes, during which you will be placed on your back. Your doctor will then place a clear plastic plate to flatten your cornea and use laser energy to create

thousands of bubbles of gas and water to create a flap in the cornea. You may notice discomfort at this stage.

Your doctor next uses a different laser to vaporize some of your corneal tissue. After this step, the flap is put back into its normal position.

RECOVERY

Just like any surgical procedure there are precautions to follow after and potential risks. Your cornea will not get

stitches, so it's important to wear a shield to protect from accidentally rubbing your eye.

If you detect signs of infection, experience severe pain or notice your vision is getting worse, contact your doctor immediately. Most infections can be resolved with medication. Your eyes begin healing immediately after the surgery. You should notice improvements in your vision within just a couple of hours.

Choosing the Right Glasses

Accepting the fact that glasses are necessary to correct your vision problems may be a difficult adjustment. It is important to choose a pair of glasses that offer comfortability, match your needs and fall within your budget.

If you notice blurred vision or headaches caused by squinting, it is probably time to see your eye doctor. Your local professional can give your eyes a series of tests to determine if eye glasses will solve your problem. Choosing the correct eye glasses may seem like a daunting task, but it will be easier if you know some key components to consider.

DIFFERENT LENSES

There are many different materials used in manufacturing prescription eye glasses. The first lenses were made from glass, but this material made glasses too heavy and highly subject to damage. Glass is typically no longer used due to the risk of potential harm a broken lens may cause to your eye.

You will likely see the term “high-index plastics” when choosing your lens. During the past 20 years, this material has become incredibly popular. It is the thinnest lens available, which helps keep your glasses lightweight. Your eye doctor can offer you expert advice on which lens is right for your situation.

COMFORTABILITY

Your new prescription eye glasses will become part of your everyday wardrobe. It is important to choose a frame



that makes you feel confident and comfortable. Your prescription may limit your choice of frames.

Talk with your optician for advice on which frames will enhance your facial features. You want your glasses to be

part function and part fashion, so don't be afraid to try on numerous pairs to make sure they fit your style and needs.

AFFORDABILITY

Your new prescription eye glasses may be costlier than

you expect. Check with your health insurance company to see if eye care is covered. According to the Vision Service Plan, the national average cost of prescription eye glasses is \$196.

This number can vary

depending on the type of lens you require. Lenses for more serious problems require special frames that can sometimes cost up to \$600 overall. Check in with your insurance company so you can be mentally and financially prepared for the bill.