

EyeSmart News

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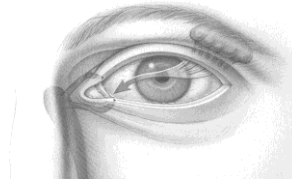
EyeSmart News provides information and resources to help you and your family safeguard your vision and the health of your eyes. You signed up to receive this newsletter at www.geteyesmart.org.

Got Questions? Get Answers.

Ask an Eye MD was launched this month by the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Now you can ask an ophthalmologist your questions about eye health. Visit <http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/ask/> to learn more and to ask a question.

Did You Know?

Tears are produced by glands around the eye and are washed across the eye towards the nose. They drain from the eye through two small openings called the upper and lower puncta. The tears then move through a passage called the canaliculus and into the lacrimal sac. From the sac, the tears then drop down the tear duct and drain into the back of the nose and throat. That is why your nose runs when you cry.



Medical Myth Exposed

It's Okay to Use Contact Lens Solution After It Has Expired

False. Contact lens solutions, like most eye care products and pharmaceuticals, have an expiration date stamped on the package. The disinfection solution may lose its potency over time. Therefore, old solution may not adequately disinfect the contact lens, putting the wearer at risk for contact lens-related eye infections. In addition to using solution that has not expired, you should to never reuse solution or top off old solution with water to make a bottle of solution go further. For a more information about contact lens care visit www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/correction/contact_lens_care.cfm

Vigorous Exercise May Prevent Vision Loss

Exercise may have yet another benefit – vision protection. In a recent U.S. study, researchers found that vigorous exercise reduced the risk of cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. The study tracked approximately 41,000 runners for more than seven years. It suggested that people can possibly lessen their risk for these eye diseases by taking part in a vigorous fitness regimen. On average, running 2 to 4 km (1.2 to 2.5 miles) a day reduced the risk by 19% and running more than 4 km a day reduced the risk by 42% to 54%, compared with those who ran

less than 2 km a day. It seems exercise could provide similar protective benefits for the eyes as it does for the heart and other bodily systems.

A cataract is a clouding of the eye's naturally clear lens, your eye becomes like a window that is frosted or yellowed. Cataracts are a leading cause of vision loss, especially as we age. Age-related macular degeneration reduces vision in the central part of the retina. Macular degeneration can cause sudden, severe loss of vision in the middle of your visual field. For more information on these and other eye diseases, visit <http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/diseases/>

Vision Problems are Common in Children with Hearing Loss

About one-fifth of children who have a particular type of hearing loss also have visual disorders, according to a recent study. An estimated one to three children per 1,000 has some degree of sensorineural hearing loss, which occurs as a result of abnormalities in the inner ear or in the auditory center of the brain. Half of all cases in children result from environmental causes and half from genetic causes; one gene accounts for a large proportion of sensorineural hearing loss cases in Caucasian patients. Because children with hearing loss rely heavily on their other senses, undiscovered visual problems could have further harmful effects on their development. Eye examinations for all children with sensorineural hearing loss can lead to early diagnosis and to help minimize visual problems.

Eye Injuries from Paintballs

A recent case study on paintball injuries concluded that paintball-related eye injuries are often severe and visually devastating. The researchers looked at 36 eyes of 36 patients who sustained eye injuries from paintballs. They also tracked the medical treatment within the first three days of the injury and the time period after the injury. The average patient was 21 years old and was not wearing protective eyewear when injured. Eighty-one percent required surgery for their injuries. The use of protective eyewear may have eliminated 97 percent of the injuries in this case study, once again highlighting the importance of wearing protective eyewear during sports and other activities. For more information on eye injuries and how to protect yourself against them, visit <http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/injuries>



Keeping an Eye on Age-Related Macular Degeneration

AMD is a main cause of vision loss in the United States, affecting 10 to 15 million Americans. Advanced AMD destroys the detailed, central vision we need to recognize faces, read, drive, and enjoy daily life. March is AMD Awareness Month, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology together with the American Society of Retina Specialists, the Macula Society, and The Retina Society, encourage Americans to know their risks for AMD.

The disease takes two forms, termed “dry” and “wet.” In the early “dry” stage, drusen, yellow deposits, develop under the retina, but most people do not have a change in vision. Patients with more and larger drusen, and more pigment changes in the central retina, or macula, are considered to have intermediate AMD and are at higher risk for both advanced “dry” and “wet” AMD. The majority of those with intermediate AMD do not progress to the advanced stage but should be carefully followed by an Eye MD to insure timely treatment if needed. In the “wet” form, abnormal new blood vessels develop under the retina that bleed or leak fluid and form scars, causing central vision loss. Only about 10 percent of patients with AMD have the “wet” form, but until the advent of new treatments two years ago it was responsible for most severe vision loss.

AMD patients should control their weight and hypertension and quit smoking. These are lifestyle choices that are good for heart health generally and will also benefit AMD patients. UV light exposure has been linked to AMD in some studies, so UV-blocking sunglasses and hats may be important, especially for people with light-colored eyes. A specific high-potency supplement, the Age-Related Disease Study (AREDS) formula, may slow progression in people with intermediate or early-advanced AMD. (Smokers need to use a formula without beta carotene.) Those with the early stage of the disease should take a daily multivitamin.

For more information about AMD and other eye diseases, visit www.geteyesmart.org.

No-Cost Medical Eye Care to Qualified Seniors In Support of AMD Month

In support of National AMD Month, EyeCare America encourages all seniors to see if they qualify for an eye exam at no out-of-pocket cost available through its AMD EyeCare Program by calling 1-866-324-EYES (3937). Recent studies also show that eating foods rich in antioxidants such as lutein, zeaxanthin, omega-3 fatty acids, beta carotene, vitamin C, vitamin E and zinc, may reduce the risk of AMD, or slow its progression in some people. In light of this, EyeCare America has developed a cookbook called *Feast Your Eyes on This!*, which includes eye healthy recipes from celebrity chefs. The complete cookbook is available online at www.eyecareamerica.org.

EyeCare America’s AMD EyeCare Program is a year-round program that promotes annual eye exams for people 65 and older, raises awareness of AMD, provides the latest information about treatment options and low vision services, offers free AMD educational materials, and facilitates access to care at no out-of-pocket cost for those who qualify.

What’s Your Story?

We want to know your own experience with eye health and eye disease –how have these touched your life or the life of a family member? What made you interested in EyeSmart, and what have you learned that’s helped you or someone close to you? Send your story to eyesmart@ao.org (note: we will not share or distribute your story without your permission).

Forward this newsletter to a friend or relative

