



May is Healthy Vision Month

Feeling Fit, SUN Newspapers

Written by Amy Zusman

The National Eye Institute has deemed the month of May “Healthy Vision Month.” Our sense of sight is easily taken for granted. Here are a few tips to help keep your eyes safe and healthy.

1. Use sun protection. Your eyes need protection from the sun’s harmful rays just like your skin does. Over-exposure to the sun can cause early cataracts, skin cancer around the eyelids, macular degeneration and premature wrinkles.

2. Wear eye protection. There are an estimated 2.5 million eye injuries in the United States each year. Many of these injuries can be avoided with the use of proper eye protection.

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved eyewear is recommended for home and recreational use. Accidents to the eye can occur around the home while gardening, doing repairs, or using harsh chemicals.

Sports-related injuries are also common while fishing, golfing and playing baseball, to name a few. Wearing a cap, proper eye protection and being cognizant of your surroundings can be a safeguard to any potential injury.

3. Know your family history. Many diseases tend to run in families. Diseases such as age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma are hereditary. By making your eye professional aware of your family medical history, you are providing a valuable tool for early detection and intervention. Being knowledgeable about your history is imperative as it can lead to a more favorable outcome.

4. Proper nutrition. A healthy diet with a variety of green leafy vegetables, fruits, lean protein and omega-3s is a wonderful way to prevent eye disease and maintain overall health. Avoid processed foods that are high in calories and fat. Consult your family doctor before taking any vitamin or mineral supplements.

5. Don’t smoke. Smoking has been linked to an increased risk of early cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. The research is very clear: Smoking is bad for your eyesight, general health and the health of those around you.

6. See an eye professional. Annual eye exams are a good rule of thumb. Children are typically followed by their pediatrician and screened for vision problems at their annual exam.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends the following guidelines when one should see an eye doctor (ophthalmologist):

- Before the age of 5, toddlers should be screened for common childhood problems such as crossed eyes, lazy eye, nearsightedness and farsightedness.

- From age 20-29, at least once during this period.
- From age 30-39, at least twice during this period.
- Age 40, comprehensive eye exam, with future frequency determined by this exam.
- Age 65 and over, every one to two years.

Individuals at higher risk for eye disease should be examined more often (African Americans over 40, a history of high blood pressure, family history of eye disease or injury.)

Diabetics should have an annual eye exam.

Since 1988, Dr. Zusman, Board Certified in Ophthalmology, provides a range of services from routine eye exams to medical and surgical treatment of eye diseases. [Zusman Eye Care Center in Port Charlotte, FL](#) prides itself on offering state of the art equipment in a modern, comfortable office setting. Dr. Zusman has been named a "Top Florida Doctor" (Florida Monthly) and a "Most Recommended Physician" by National Consumers Survey for Florida.
