

MARCH 2021 CCDC SAFETY MESSAGE

March is Workplace Eye Wellness Month

March is Workplace Eye Health and Safety Month. YourSightMatters.com reports that each year over 2,000 Americans suffer an eye injury. This means that almost one million Americans have experienced some vision loss due to eye injury, which has resulted in more than \$300 million in lost work time, medical expenses, and workman's compensation.

Most of us wear safety glasses for outside work, construction work, animal handling or other activities where an object can enter our eye. Office work may cause eye stress for many of us as the most common eye problem is computer vision syndrome caused by blue light emission. While consistently being on your computer will not permanently damage your vision, it can make your eyes feel irritated and fatigued.

Too much screen time and not enough breaks can cause headaches, inattentiveness, neck pain, back strain, and dry eye. Digital-related eye strain affects people of all ages.

According to YourSightMatters.com and the American Academy of Ophthalmology, there are some ways to prevent computer vision syndrome (also known as digital eye strain) and keep your eyes feeling comfortable:

1. **Reposition your screen.** Adjust your screen to be at a right angle away from any direct light source. When using a computer, you should be sitting about 25 inches (right about at arm's length) from the screen. Also, position the screen so your eye gazes slightly downward, not straight ahead or up.
2. **Reduce the Glare.** The screens on today's digital devices often have a lot of glare. Invest in an anti-glare screen for your monitor to make computer work gentler on your eyes.
3. **Remember the 20-20-20 rule.** This rule reminds you that every 20 minutes, you should look at an object at least 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.
4. **Adjust Brightness and Contrast.** If your screen glows brighter than your surroundings, your eyes work harder to see. Adjust your screen brightness to match the level of light around you. Also, try increasing the contrast on your screen to reduce eye strain.
5. **Do not Forget to Blink.** Write yourself a note and place it on your monitor that will remind you to regularly close your eyes to keep them from getting dried out. Humans normally blink about 15 times in one minute. However, studies show that we only blink about 5 to 7 times in a minute while using computers and other digital screen devices. Blinking is the eye's way of getting the moisture it needs on its surface.
6. **Use artificial tears.** Over-the-counter eye drops can be extremely helpful in preventing dry eye and keeping your eyes comfortable. Use artificial tears to refresh your eyes when they feel dry. If you are often in a dry, warm room, consider using a humidifier to add moisture to the air.
7. **Drink water.** Adequate hydration can make a big difference, especially during the winter months when heaters and furnaces can make the air particularly dry.
8. **Use Computer Eyeglasses.** (Not "blue light blocking" glasses). If you work on a computer for many hours at a time, using computer prescription glasses allows you to focus your eyes at the intermediate computer screen distance. Some of these glasses have multifocal lenses to help you quickly shift your focus between close, intermediate and far distances.