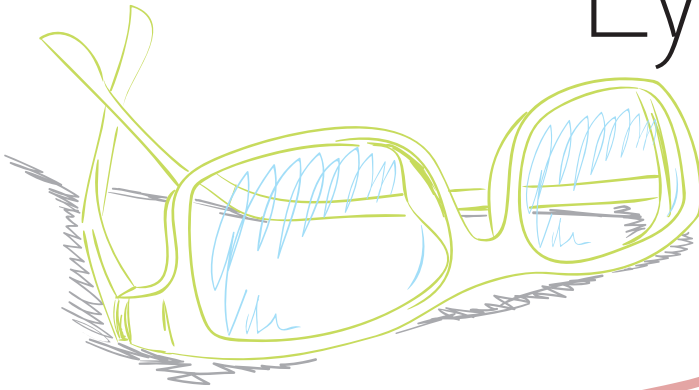


Eye Spy



Yearly physical? Check. Six-month dental cleaning? Check. Eye exam? Oh that... Stay on top of your eye health by following these easy tips from Anderson & Shapiro Eye Care's Dr. Nicole Anderson-Weiss

Don't skip the doctor. If you wear contacts or have medical conditions such as diabetes, you should be seeing an eye care professional yearly. If you haven't had an eye exam by the time you turn 40, get an appointment on the calendar, and plan to visit every one to two years. Many eye diseases, including cataracts, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration, increase in incidence as we age. Women in particular often suffer from dry eye syndrome, which can cause severe irritation, discomfort and even vision loss.

Eat a healthy diet. It goes without saying that a good diet can lead to good health—your eye health included. Specifically, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins C and E, zinc, lutein and zeaxanthin can lower the risk for cataracts, dry eyes and reduce the progression of age-related macular degeneration. Look for these in leafy green vegetables, vegetable oils, fish, nuts, citrus fruits and whole grains.

Go smoke free. Do everything in your power to put down cigarettes for good, not only for your general health, but to reduce your risk of cataracts, macular degeneration and dry eyes.

Grab your sunglasses. Suit up for summer year round—at least for your eyes. Spending long hours in the sun has been linked to cataracts, growths on the eye (which can be cancerous) and macular degeneration, to name a few. Look for sunglasses that filter 99 to 100 percent of UV light.

Take computer breaks. Computer use and prolonged reading cause your blinking rate to reduce to less than half its normal rate, which can cause uncomfortable dryness and eye strain. Try positioning the screen so you look at it with a slight downward gaze while taking regular breaks to look away. And don't forget to blink—even put a note on the screen as a reminder if you have to!

Care for your contacts. To care for your lenses (and eyes), wash your hands before touching them, clean them with a proper lens solution (not water or saline solution) and dispose of them at the proper time indicated by your doctor. Don't sleep in your contacts, even if they are approved for overnight use and consider taking them out when you get home from work. And don't forget about your lens cases! They should be cleaned, air-dried and replaced on a regular basis.