

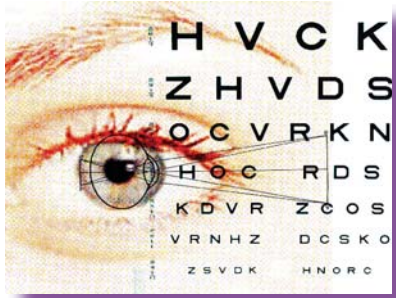
# Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



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## Good Eye Health and Vision



**W**hat do the California condor, Andean condor, and Marabou stork of Africa, have in common?

Besides having the greatest wingspan of all land birds, and weighing in at over 30 pounds, they have sharp eyesight. It has been calculated that any one of these birds circling overhead at a height of about 2,500 feet can spot an object on the ground that is less than five inches long. Good eyesight plays an important role in their protection and survival.

Similarly, good eyesight plays an important role in our mobility and the enjoyment of life, so it's important to follow some basic steps to keep your eyes seeing clearly. You should visit your eye doctor for an eye exam at least once every one to two years to help maintain good eyesight.

If you experience eye infections or symptoms of disease like loss of or blurred vision, light flashes, eye pain, redness, itching, swelling and

irritation around the eye or eyelid, see an ophthalmologist. Most eye diseases can be treated when found in an early stage.

### Common Eye Problems

#### Astigmatism

Astigmatism is characterized by an irregular curvature of the cornea. This type of disorder is also known as a refractive error. Astigmatism occurs in nearly everybody to some degree. For significant curvature, treatment is required.

#### Cause

Astigmatism can be hereditary and is often present at birth. It can also result from pressure from the eyelids on the cornea, incorrect posture or an increased use of the eyes for close work.

#### Treatment

Almost all degrees of astigmatism can be corrected with properly prescribed eyeglasses or contact lenses. For a person with only a slight degree of astigmatism, corrective lenses may not be needed at all, as long as other conditions such as nearsightedness or farsightedness are not present. If the astigmatism is moderate to high, however, corrective lenses are probably needed.

#### Myopia (or nearsightedness)

People who have myopia or nearsightedness have difficulty seeing distant objects, but can see objects that are near clearly. For example, a person who is nearsighted may not be able to make out highway signs until they are just a few feet away.

#### Cause

In people with myopia, the eyeball is too long or the cornea has too much curvature, so the light entering the eye is not focused correctly. Images focus in front of the retina, the light-sensitive part of the eye, rather than directly on the retina, causing blurred vision. Myopia runs in families and usually appears in childhood. Usually the condition plateaus, but it can worsen with age.

#### Treatment

Glasses, contact lenses, or refractive surgery can correct myopia. Refractive surgery can reduce or even eliminate your dependence on glasses or contact lenses.

Laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis, commonly called LASIK, is the most common surgery used to correct nearsightedness.

# Fact or Fiction: Myths About Your Eyes

## **F**act or Fiction: **Eating Carrots Will Improve Your Sight**

**Fact:** Carrots are high in vitamin A, a nutrient essential for good vision. Eating carrots will provide you with the small amount of vitamin A needed for good vision. Vitamin A can also be found in milk, cheese, egg yolk and liver.



## **F**act or Fiction: **Sitting Too Close to the TV Will Damage Your Vision**

**Fiction:** Sitting closer than necessary to the television may give you a headache, but it will not damage your vision.



## **F**act or Fiction: **Reading in the Dark Will Weaken Your Eyesight**

**Fiction:** You may get a headache from reading in the dark, but it will not weaken your sight.

## **W**hat is **Computer Vision Syndrome**, and how can it be avoided?

Induced eyestrain or eye fatigue, dry eyes, burning eyes, light sensitivity, blurred vision, headaches and pain in the shoulders, neck or back caused by spending ALL DAY in front of a monitor.

Computers represent the number-one source for workplace discomfort. Looking at the computer screen will not harm the eye.

Try these steps to avoid Computer Vision Syndrome:

- Turn off lights adjacent to the monitor or behind the computer. Illumination from behind the operator works best.
- The desktop should be 29 inches from the ground.
- Position the monitor and/or chair height so that when LOOKING STRAIGHT AT THE MONITOR your line of sight is directly at the top edge of the screen, (bifocal wearers require a lower screen). This generates a slight downward gaze - most comfortable for long work periods.
- Finally, the screen surface should be approximately 30 inches from your face in order that the intermediate portion of your trifocals focus properly without requiring excess accommodation from you.

For further help, if you are a member of any of the Pools, you can request a work station evaluation. All others can call CTSI for information about a work station evaluation.

Source: The Cleveland Clinic Cole Eye Institute, WebMD and the CTSI Loss Prevention Department.

## **Well Vision Benefit**

If your employer has chosen the CHP well vision benefit provided through VSP (Vision Service Plan), you can access more information by calling

800-877-7195 or

visit [www.VSP.com](http://www.VSP.com).