HEALTHY VISION MONTH

According to the CDC, approximately 12 million Americans over the age of 40 have some form of vision impairment. This number is expected to grow as the population ages.

Early detection of diseases that damage the eye can prevent or slow vision impairment, which is why the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends that people with healthy eyes and good vision have a complete dilated eye exam in their twenties, twice in their thirties, and then again at age 40 to establish a baseline for future exams.

People who wear corrective lenses have diabetes, high blood pressure, or a family history of eye disease should visit their ophthalmologists more often. Any changes to vision, eye pain, or eye injury also warrant an exam. After 65, people should have their vision checked every year or two. A comprehensive eye exam can often identify age-related eye diseases such as cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, age-related macular degeneration, and glaucoma. Talk to your ophthalmologist about an exam schedule that fits your personal health history.

Stay Healthy
Overall health impacts eye health. Smoking can increase the risk of cataracts and macular degeneration. It can also damage the optic nerve. Being active and eating a healthy diet high in omega-3 fatty acids (e.g., salmon, tuna, etc.) decreases your risk of conditions that can damage the eye.

Protect your Eyes
Eye injuries and prolonged eye strain can also damage vision. Take the following steps to protect your eyes:

- *Wear sunglasses* - choose sunglasses that block 99 to 100% of harmful UVA and UVB radiation.

- *Wear protective eyewear* - when playing sports, doing home repairs, or working with potentially dangerous equipment, wear safety glasses or goggles to pro-

tect your eyes from flying objects or debris.

- *Give your eyes a rest* - staring at a computer screen can tire and dry out your eyes. Rest your eyes every 20 minutes by looking at something about 20 feet away for around 20 seconds.

- *Prevent infections* - If you wear contact lenses, always wash your hands before putting them in or taking them out. Also, disinfect your lenses often and replace them regularly.

Healthy Body, Healthy Eyes
Keeping our eyes healthy requires good overall health. Cataracts and diabetic retinopathy are the leading causes of vision loss and blindness. Adopting a healthy lifestyle and managing health conditions like obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure can lower your risks for vision loss.

County Health Pool members should take advantage of their vision benefits to ensure that their eyes stay healthy. CTSI

Benefits Corner

CHP Vision Plan Benefits

Your vision benefits are provided through VSP. Enrolling on their website www.vsp.com allows you to view your plan benefits, download claims forms for out-of-network providers, and search for an in-network provider. You may also download and print a wallet-sized member ID card that explains how to use your benefits and provides a space to write down your doctor's contact information.

VSP provides the following benefits:

- WellVision Exam - $15 copay (once every 12 months)

- $150 frame allowance (once every 24 months)

- $170 allowance featured frame brands (once every 24 months)

- $80 frame allowance at Costco (once every 24 months)

- 20% savings on the amount you pay over your allowance

- Contact lenses (instead of glasses) $150 allowance (once every 12 months)

- Contact lens exam (fitting and evaluation) covered up to $60 (once every 12 months)

For a complete list of coverage, view the CHP Vision Benefit Summary on www.ctsi.org. The VSP network also offers member-only savings and an online eyewear store. Please note that you do not need a member ID card to see an eye doctor, and claim forms are unnecessary for in-network providers.

As always, CTSI staff is here to assist you with your health, dental, vision, or life insurance coverage. You can reach us at 303 861 0507.