Health Enews

6 Ways to Keep Your Eyes Healthy

CATHOLIC MUTUAL GROUP

There are many ways to keep your eyes healthy and ensure that you are seeing your best. The following are 6 tips in keeping your eyes healthy.

1. **Wear Sunglasses.** Sun exposure is associated with the development of cataracts and age- related macular degeneration. The best way to protect your eyes is to wear sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of both UV-A and UV-B radiation.

2. **Avoid Smoking.** Smoking increases the risk of developing age- related diseases such as cataracts and macular degeneration. Smoking can also damage the optic nerve in your eye. The optic nerve carries images you see with your eye to the brain.

3. **Give Your Eyes a Rest.** When spending a long time on the computer or focusing on one thing apply the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes, look away 20 feet in front of you, for 20 seconds. The 20-20-20 can help reduce eye strain.

4. **Know Your Family History.** It's important to know if a family member has been diagnosed with an eye disease since many are inherited. For example, macular degeneration and glaucoma have a strong family risk factor.

5. **Eat a Healthy Diet.** A diet rich in fruits and vegetables, particularly dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach, kale, or collard greens can help keep your eyes healthy. Research has shown that foods high in Omega-3 fatty acids such as salmon, tuna, and halibut decrease the risk of developing age related macular degeneration. Also, oranges, peaches, red peppers, tomatoes, and strawberries contain high amounts of Vitamin C, an antioxidant critical to eye health. Additionally, foods high in zinc such as legumes, oysters, lean red meat, poultry, and fortified cereals may protect your eyes from the damaging effects of light.

6. **Maintain a Healthy Weight.** Being overweight or obese can lead to diabetes which increases the risk of glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. Both diseases can eventually lead to blindness.

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