

WINTER EYE HEALTH

The winter weather has arrived, and it's time to protect your eyes, especially as the pandemic may mean you are spending more time indoors. Here are some of the ways that winter can affect your eye health, and some tips for prevention.



WINTER SUN



Sunglasses aren't just for summer. Snow and ice are reflective, so the sun's rays can reach your eyes from below as well as above. The low sun in winter can be dazzling, so wear sunglasses on sunny winter days, particularly when driving.



If you wear glasses, ask about having anti-reflection coating on the lenses to reduce the effects of sun glare while driving.

DRY EYES

Central heating can make already dry eyes feel worse. There are some simple steps you can take to feel more comfortable:



LOWER THE TEMPERATURE IN ROOMS WHEN POSSIBLE.



OPEN WINDOWS, EVEN FOR A FEW MINUTES.



Use a humidifier, or have a bowl of water near the radiator to help humidify the air.

You can get moisturising eye drops or ointments over the counter from your optometrist or pharmacist if you need to.



WINTER LIGHTING

Many people will be working from home this winter, and lighting is very important. You will see better in bright light than in dim light, so you might find that you need to wear your glasses more when the lighting is poor. If you have problems seeing in low light, we recommend:



Sitting close to a window during the day if you need to see something clearly, like the text in a book or magazine.



HAVING GOOD LIGHTING CLOSE TO YOU AT HOME WHEN YOU NEED IT, INCLUDING A LIGHT SOURCE LIKE A DESK LIGHT.

Spending time outside. There is evidence that encouraging children to spend time outdoors could reduce the onset of myopia, so do try and make sure they have some time outside each day.



INCREASED SCREEN TIME

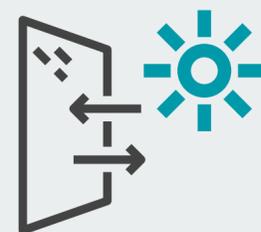
During the pandemic, you may have found that your screen time has increased as you stay indoors more. There is no evidence to suggest increased screen time damages your vision, however you may find it tiring to look at a monitor for long periods of time. To reduce eye strain, we suggest:



Positioning your monitor so it's roughly arm's length away from your eyes.

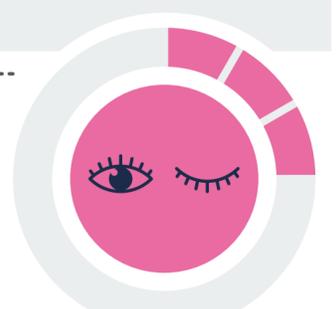


LOOKING AT SOMETHING 20 FT AWAY, FOR 20 SECONDS, EVERY 20 MINUTES.



MINIMISING ANY DISTRACTING REFLECTIONS IN YOUR SCREEN, E.G. WINDOWS.

Blinking regularly. Focusing on a screen may make you blink less, which may make your eyes dry and uncomfortable.



THE COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS

lookafteryoureyes.org

IF YOU STILL HAVE DIFFICULTY SEEING, BOOK AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR OPTOMETRIST.