

Eat well

Protecting your eyes starts with the food you eat.

Studies have shown that nutrients in omega-3 fatty acids, zinc and vitamins C and E may help to prevent age-related vision problems such as macular degeneration and cataracts.

Foods containing eye-friendly nutrients include green leafy vegetables, oily fish such as salmon and citrus fruits.

You should also ensure that your alcohol intake is within the Department of Health's recommended limits.

Be screen smart

Although working at a computer will not harm

the health of your eyes, sitting staring at a screen for long periods can cause 'screen fatigue' – sore, itchy or tired eyes; headaches; impaired colour perception and temporary blurring of your vision.

So, it is important to take regular breaks to keep your eyes feeling fresh and bright.

This leaflet has been published to mark National Eye Health Week 16 – 22 September.

For more advice about caring for your eyes visit www.visionmatters.org.uk



Top tips for good eye health



Follow our simple lifestyle tips to help keep your eyes and vision healthy.

Regular check ups

Get your eyes tested every two years even if you think your vision is fine. Some eye conditions, for example open angle glaucoma, may not show any noticeable symptoms so regular check-ups are vital.

Quit the habit

If you smoke, you have another good reason to kick the habit. Smoking is directly linked to blindness. Current smokers are four times more likely to develop macular degeneration (the UK's leading cause of blindness) compared to past smokers or non-smokers.

It's all relative

Talk to your relatives about your family eye health history as some eye conditions have genetic links such as glaucoma or squint. It's important that you share this information with your optometrist or eye health professional.

Be cool in the sun

Protect your eyes when it is sunny or when you're in high glare areas such as near snow or water.

Cumulative UV exposure can increase your risk of developing cataracts or macular degeneration.

When choosing sunglasses make sure that they are safe as well as stylish! Look out for the CE or BS EN 1836:2005 marks – this ensures that they provide a safe level of protection from the sun's damaging UVA and UVB rays.

Contact care

If you wear contact lenses make sure you look after them properly.

Thoroughly wash and dry your hands before touching your contact lenses or your eyes and only ever clean your contacts using the contact lens solution recommended by your practitioner.

Never shower, sleep or swim with your contact lenses in because this can put you at

risk of developing a serious eye infection which could lead to blindness.

Also, don't wear them for longer periods than those recommended by your optician.

Protect your eyes

If you work with hazardous or airborne materials at work or home wear safety glasses or protective goggles to protect your eyes from injury.

Keep fit and healthy

Regular exercise is essential to stay fit and healthy but it is also important that when playing sports such as squash that you wear protective eye wear such as helmets or sports goggles to protect your eyes from a flying ball.