Workplace Eye Wellness Month

Each year, nearly 25,000 Americans visit the emergency room due to a workplace eye injury. During Workplace Eye Wellness Month this March, the American Academy of Ophthalmology reminds employers and workers about the importance of wearing certified and approved eye protection.¹

Eye Care at Work

We usually think of work-related eye injuries as being isolated to outdoor jobs such as construction work, landscaping or animal handling. Ironically, working in an office can be just as hazardous to your eyesight. The most common eye problem is computer vision syndrome. While consistently being on your computer will not permanently damage your vision, it can make your eyes feel irritated and fatigued.² If brightness of the screen is an issue, Anjulie Quick, MD, KU Eye comprehensive ophthalmologist, suggests buying a filter.

The average American worker spends seven hours a day on the computer either in the office or working from home. March is Save Your Vision Month and the American Optometric Association is working to educate both employers and employees about how to avoid digital eye strain in the workplace.³ Dirck DeKeyser, OD, one of KU Eye’s optometrists, stated that the use of fish oil and/or a local humidifier in the winter are also potentially helpful for dry eyes.

There are some ways to prevent computer vision syndrome and keep your eyes feeling comfortable:

1. **Reposition your screen.** Adjust your screen to be at a right angle away from any direct light source. Invest in an anti-glare screen for your monitor to make computer work gentler on your eyes.

2. **Remember the 20-20-20 rule.** This rule reminds you that every 20 minutes, you should look at an object at least 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.

3. **Don’t forget to blink.** While it may sound ridiculous, write yourself a note and place it on your monitor. Write “Blink Often” or any other message that will remind you to regularly close your eyes to keep them from getting dried out.

4. **Use artificial tears.** Over-the-counter eye drops can be extremely helpful in preventing dry eye and keeping your eyes comfortable.

5. **Drink water.** Adequate hydration can make a big difference, especially during the winter months when heaters and furnaces can make the air particularly dry.

6. **Schedule regular comprehensive eye exams.** Nothing can replace the importance of having an eye exam by a licensed ophthalmologist at regular intervals. If you have any concerns about your vision or experience any changes with your eyesight, do not delay in making an appointment.²

¹AAO: https://www.aao.org/newsroom/observances
²http://yoursightmatters.com/march-is-workplace-eye-wellness-month/
³https://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/caring-for-your-vision/protecting-your-vision/computer-vision-syndrome