

- Vision

How to save your sight

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The eyes are the windows to the soul. This old adage holds true even in terms of the eyes giving us warning signs about what's going on inside our body. Did you know that eye health is related to our heart and liver health?

High blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases can cause optic nerve stroke commonly called eye stroke. This is caused by insufficient blood supply to the optic nerve resulting to sudden loss of vision. Hypertension also causes Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD), which occurs among 50 to 60-year-olds. The central vision is greatly affected. Symptoms of AMD include, blind spots, loss of central vision, distorted vision, straight lines appearing wavy, blurry vision, difficulty reading fine print, or driving.

Diabetes, which is characterized by elevated blood glucose or sugar level, also damages the eyes, resulting in a condition known as diabetic retinopathy. In this case, the vision is impaired. The retina is damaged. It is the part of the eye that receives light and sends a signal to the brain in order for a person to recognize the object seen.

Moving further down the body and away from the heart, the eyes are also connected to liver health. A malfunctioning liver fails to efficiently detoxify the body from toxins. This could lead to toxin buildup and formation of free radicals that cause damage to the eyes' healthy tissues. Failure to resolve liver problems may lead to acquired night blindness, cataracts, and AMD.

Cataract is a condition that is characterized by the clouding of the eye lens resulting in clouded vision. This is similar to looking through a foggy window.

Night blindness, also known as nyctalopia, causes an individual to have diminished vision at night or in poor lit areas. A person suffering from night blindness will have difficulty adjusting to changes in lighting.

Aside from existing medical conditions that potentially damage the eyes, our lifestyle, especially during this pandemic, can also be the culprit. Our screen exposure has greatly increased—whether it is from working from home, online schooling, binge watching Netflix, or online gaming.

Do you experience any of the following? Fatigue, headache blurred vision, eyestrain, red eyes, dry eyes, stinging sensation in the eyes, and double vision? You might be suffering from Computer Vision Syndrome.

Many of us are guilty of neglecting our eye health. Take time to reflect on your daily habits that could potentially damage your sight. Save your sight by following these practical tips. Include food that's rich in carotenoids (beta-carotene and lutein). These are plant chemicals that prevent healthy cells from being damaged by free radicals. Carotenoids are abundant in orange, yellow, and red vegetables. Eat carrots, tomatoes, bell peppers, water-

melon, cantaloupe, camote, or sweet potatoes and squash. But wait! There's more! Even dark green vegetables like malunggay, kangkong, spinach, and broccoli contain betacarotene. Eating at least three servings of vegetables a day will surely give you a clearer vision.

Eat food that's high in omega-3. These fatty acids quell inflammation caused by oxidative stress that lead to Dry Eye Syndrome and diabetic retinopathy. Omega 3 also helps keep the cells in the optic nerve intact. Walnuts, soy, chia seeds, flaxseed, mackerel, herring, anchovies, tuna, salmon, sardines, canola oil, soybean oil, and oats are high in omega 3.