

- Eye / Vision

KEEPING OUR EYES HEALTHY

Our eyes connect us to our world.

Maritzburg Sun (South Africa) · 24 Sep 2021 · 21 · By Dr. Sanjay Laloo, PMB Eye Hospital

However, in 2020, 1.1 billion people globally were living with vision loss. This included 91 million children. 90% of this could have been prevented or treated.



In 2020, in South Africa, 11 million people had visual loss and 370 000 people were blind. Here are ways to keep your eyes healthy:

- Regular eyesight and eye health checks with your optometrist and/or your ophthalmologist are important. This will assess the overall health of your eyes and pickup any conditions that may cause visual loss. Eye checks should occur every two years. In people over 50, people with medical conditions such as diabetes, and people with a family history of eye problems, a yearly check is recommended.
- Children should have an early visual screening performed by the paediatrician.
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun, even when cloudy. They must block UV light.
- Use safety glasses and goggles to protect your eyes during tasks where there may be dust or metal fragments, or in sports such as squash.
- Stop rubbing your eyes, especially in children. Ocular allergies can cause eye rubbing. If untreated, this can change the eye shape and result in the need for spectacles and possible long-term visual loss.
- Avoid touching your eyes to prevent infections. Wash hands before instilling eye drops or handling contact lenses.
- Stop smoking as this increases your risk of macular degeneration and cataracts.
- Rest your eyes. Prolonged screen use can cause eyestrain. Rest your eyes by taking a break every 20 minutes to look at something about 20 feet away for 20 seconds (20-20-20 rule).
- Eat healthy foods.
- Exercise. This lowers your risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol which can affect your eyes. General health improves ocular health.