YOUR EYES ARE YOUR HEALTH MAP

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Your eye colour may appear to be only a personal feature, but according Dr Olekantse Kakabe, it can offer meaningful clues about your health. Eye colour is determined by melanin in the iris, the muscle tissue that controls how much light enters the eye. High melanin levels produce brown eyes, while lower amounts create hazel, green, blue, or grey. Amber eyes develop from a yellow pigment called lipochrome. Although there are six main eye colours, Dr Kakabe notes that the patterns within them vary so widely that no two sets of eyes are the same.



Brown eyes are the most common worldwide, while green eyes are the rarest, found in only a small fraction of the population. People with albinism often have pink or red eyes because their irises lack melanin, allowing light to reflect off the blood vessels at the back of the eye.

Dr Kakabe explains that eye colour can sometimes indicate health risks. People with lighter eyes, such as blue, green, or grey, are more sensitive to sunlight because they have less melanin to filter intense light. This makes them more vulnerable to UV-related eye damage and agerelated macular degeneration. He says regular examinations are important for detecting early signs of these conditions.

People with brown or black eyes have more melanin, which offers greater natural protection from sunlight. However, Dr Kakabe points out that darker eyes may absorb more heat, increasing the risk of cataracts over time. He advises routine checks with specialists and the use of UVprotective sunglasses.

Certain eye changes may signal deeper medical concerns. Heterochromia, where a person has two different eye colours, can be genetic or the result of injury, but sudden changes should be examined immediately. Yellowing of the eyes can indicate liver problems, while a copper-coloured ring around the cornea may be a sign of Wilson's Disease, a disorder that affects copper metabolism.

Dr Kakabe stresses that everyone, regardless of eye colour, should protect their vision through everyday habits. He recommends wearing sunglasses with proper UV protection, eating foods such as spinach, salmon, and carrots, and scheduling annual eye examinations. While eye colour can give useful hints, he says consistent care remains the most reliable way to maintain long-term eye health.