

Protect your sight



Healthy eyesight is something no one wants to be without. Good habits can help you protect your eyes, so that they will last a lifetime. Here are some tips.

The World Health Organisation estimates that up to 80% of blindness and serious visual loss around the world is avoidable through prevention and treatment. However, once you have lost your eyesight, you have probably lost it for good. That is why it's so important to take care of your eyes now, to ensure that there are no underlying problems that may cause blindness in the future.

What can go wrong with your eyes?

There are many things that can go wrong with your eyes, including:

- **Cataracts:** The lens of the eye becomes cloudy.
- **Conjunctivitis:** Inflammation of the membrane covering the eye.
- **Glaucoma:** A build-up of fluid inside the eye ball.
- **Vision problems:** Far or near sightedness.
- **Macular degeneration:** Loss of central vision, caused by ageing.

What can you do to protect your eyes?

Regular check-ups.

The signs of eye disease are hard to spot, so having your eyes tested is a simple and vital part of maintaining healthy eyes. One of the best ways to look after your eyes is to have them tested regularly by a qualified optometrist. Having your eyes tested for vision and general health can

help identify problems early and prevent loss of eyesight.

Proper lighting.

Poor lighting can be detrimental to your eyes. Poor lighting in a room when you are reading, watching TV, or using the computer strains the eyes, making them work harder to convey messages to the brain.

Prevent eye infections.

Avoid rubbing your eyes with your hands. Even though you may think they are clean, your hands are breeding grounds for bacteria.

Help your eyes relax.

Your eyes work all day, help them to relax by saving used teabags and chilling them in the fridge. Place these over your eyes to cool them down after a stressful day. Alternatives would include cucumber or chilled teaspoons, which can be very soothing.

Always wear sunglasses outdoors.

UV-rays from the sun can cause similar damage to the eye as they do to the skin. It can result in cataracts and macular degeneration, which can in turn lead to vision impairment. Choose polycarbonate lenses or polarised sunglasses, which absorb as much as 100% of UV-light. Also look for sunglasses that offer glare protection. Well-fitted sunglasses are best, as they keep UV-light from entering your eyes.