

A Sharper View



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- Glaucoma The Silent Stealer of Sight
- Frame Frenzy
- Allergy Eyes
- The Truth About Cataracts
- Tips for Managing Dry Eye Syndrome
- I Need Bifocals? A Story of Denial

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Glaucoma - The Silent Stealer of Sight

Glaucoma is the second most common cause for blindness in the United States of America.

This disease affects the optic nerve which carries visual information from the eye to the brain.

The front part of the eye is filled with a clear fluid called aqueous humor. This fluid is always being made behind the colored part of the eye (iris). It leaves the eye through channels in the front of the eye in an area called the anterior chamber angle.

Anything that slows or blocks the flow of this fluid out of the eye will cause pressure to build up in the eye. This pressure is called intraocular pressure (IOP). In most cases of glaucoma, this pressure is high and causes damage to the optic nerve.

Open-Angle Glaucoma is the most common type of glaucoma. The cause is unknown, however an increase in eye pressure occurs

on the optic nerve. This type of glaucoma tends to run in families so Your risk is higher if you have a parent or grandparent with open-angle glaucoma. People of African descent are at a particularly high risk for this disease.

Angle-Closure Glaucoma occurs when the exit of the aqueous humor fluid is suddenly blocked. This causes quick, severe, and painful rise in the pressure in the eye. This is an emergency situation and very different from open-angle which is painless and slow.

Congenital Glaucoma is seen in babies and often runs in families. It is present at birth and is caused by abnormal eye development.

Secondary Glaucoma is caused by drugs like corticosteroids, eye diseases such as uveitis, systemic diseases and trauma.

An annual eye exam is the most important element in detection and treatment of glaucoma.

Symptoms:

Open-Angle:

- Most people experience no symptoms
- Once vision loss occurs, the damage is already severe
- There is a slow loss of side vision (peripheral)

Angle-Closure:

- Symptoms may come and go at first, or steadily become worse
- Sudden, severe pain in one eye
- Cloudy Vision
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Red or Swollen Eye
- Rainbow-like halos around lights

Congenital Glaucoma:

- Symptoms are usually noticed when the child is a few months old
- Cloudiness in the front of the eye
- Enlargement of one eye or both eyes
- Red Eye

Frame Frenzy

Most of us remember a time when glasses were large, tortoise, gold, and made us feel like we had a huge sign blinking over our heads that said "look how nerdy I am." Thankfully this isn't how the world of eyewear is anymore, at least not at Sharper Vision!

We have introduced several new lines of eyewear that em-

body the vivid colors, styles, and details of the European market that set the standard for fashion in eyewear. Those who wear glasses can assure you that when you HAVE to wear something everyday to function, you might as well feel comfortable and confident knowing you look amazing. Our opticians Curtis and Kat, have been in this field for a combined 20+ years of

experience and are experts in the art of frame choice. So if you're nervous about choosing your next piece, or you feel like an update might be in order for you, stop on by! Like Mama always said about your veggies, "You should have to like it, but you *should* at least **TRY** it." You just may sur-



Allergy Eyes



“Medications and Cosmetics can play a significant role in causing eye allergies.”



Swelling, Mucus Drainage, Irritation, Redness, and Itchiness are all common symptoms of ocular allergies.

A common conversation with our front desk often involves a panic stricken patient calling because their eye is red, itchy, swollen, and leaking out the most colorful mucus they have seen since the great flu season of 1996. The culprit? More often than not, ocular allergies, that's right....allergies!

Eye allergies are usually associated with other allergic issues particularly hay fever and atopic eczema. The causes of eye allergies are similar to those of allergic asthma and hay fever.

Medications and cosmetics can play a significant role in causing eye allergies. Reactions to eye irritants and other conditions such as pink eye (conjunctivitis) are often confused with eye allergy.

Any kind of irritant whether environmental, infectious, or manmade can cause symptoms consistent with eye allergies. Only a trip to your regular eye care provider can diagnose your condition correctly and begin the treatment process for relief of this irritating and sometimes debilitating condition.

So how does your eye doctor treat ocular allergies? Can't a person just buy some Visine and call it good? Read on friends...

There are a few things you can do at home if your allergy is not severe such as flushing the eye with the lukewarm water or using an artificial tear to help prevent allergens from sticking to the conjunctiva. Tear substitutions can also improve the defense function of the natural tear film.

Antihistamine eye drops work by blocking histamine receptors in the conjunctiva. They are effective in relieving the itch, but not reducing the swelling or redness.

The side effects of these medications include mild stinging and burning of the eyes upon use, headache, and sleepiness. However, treatment at the site of irritation is preferable to systemic antihistamines which can dry out the eyes and take longer to bring relief.

The use of nasal decongestant sprays can also bring fairly quick relief, however, it is not encouraged for you to continue prolonged use as it tends to render this treatment far less effective over time.

There are also a myriad of other drop treatments including but not limited to anti-inflammatory steroid drops. However, these should be used with caution, particularly patients with glaucoma or cataracts as it can affect internal ocular pressures.

At times, your doctor will also suggest some systemic or over the counter (OTC) medications for allergies or even allergy shots when situations are severe enough, or a combination of other methods aren't as effective.

So can eye allergies be prevented? Well the answer to that is yes and no. Avoidance is key. Try to avoid both airborne and contact allergens. Rubbing your eyes is also a trigger and should be strictly avoided.

While the prognosis is good for those that suffer from ocular allergies, symptoms often do reoccur based on sensitivity and environmental changes.

However, if your symptoms do not clear up with proper treatment from your eye care provider, more serious issues could be underlying. There are some eye issues that can mask themselves with similar symptoms, and if left untreated can cause pain or vision loss.

As always, if you're experiencing something unusual, painful, redness, irritation, burning, loss of vision or other symptoms that are not typical with your eyes, please don't hesitate to call and schedule an appointment with your eye care provider.



Cosmetic Allergy

The Truth About Cataracts

We've all heard about cataracts, in fact, most of us remember our grandparents having them or having them removed. The truth is, cataracts are quite common. So what exactly is a cataract?

A cataract is a clouding of the lens in the eye that affects vision. Most cataracts are directly correlated to age, in fact, by the age of 80 over half of all Americans will either have cataracts or will have had surgery to remove them.

Cataracts can appear in either eye, or both eyes, however, they cannot spread from one eye to another.

The lens lies behind the iris and is made of mostly of proteins and water in such a formation that allows light to pass through and remain clear. However, as we age, the proteins may start to clump together and cause the lens to blur. Over time, without treat-

ment, cataracts can grow and become very problematic with your vision.

There is much research regarding what causes cataracts, however, those with diabetes, and those that smoke and drink alcohol and have prolonged exposure to the sun are more likely to suffer from cataracts.

While cataracts are often associated with aging, they can begin much earlier in certain individuals for a variety of reasons. Detection and treatment of a cataract begins with your annual eye health exam.

Some symptoms of cataracts include:

- Cloudy or Blurred Vision
- Poor Night Vision
- Colors Seem Faded
- Night Glare
- Frequent Prescription

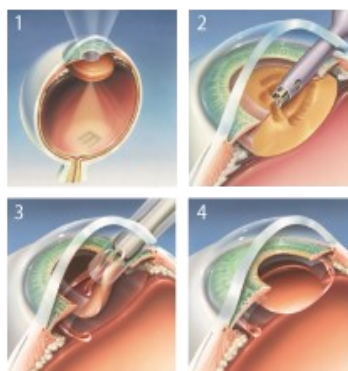
changes in your eyewear

-Glare issues around lights

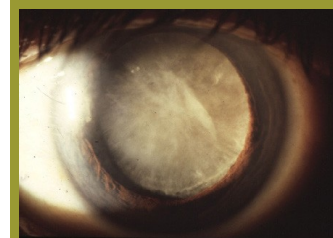
-Halos around lights or objects

While these are common symptoms of a cataract, there are also other eye issues or diseases that can have similar symptoms.

Be sure to schedule your routine eye exam every year to ensure the health of your eyes, the sharpness of your vision, and stay informed about your ocular health. After all, 80% of everything you experience is through your eyes!



“By the age of 80, over half of all Americans will either have cataracts or will have had surgery to remove them.”



Tips to Managing Dry Eye Syndrome

There are several treatments available for the common issue many people face known as Dry Eye Syndrome.

While there are always a multitude of options at your optometrist's office, there are also some things you can try at home to bring relief to this irritating condition.

First of all, there are many things you can do with your nutritional intake that can help

with your symptoms of dry eye.

Taking fish oil or omega 3 can stabilize fatty acids in the glands of the eyelids. Flax seed is also known for stabilizing fatty acids and has positive benefits for the heart, blood vessels, and skin much like omega 3.

Drink more water (6-8 glasses a day), and drink LESS coffee, tea, and sodas. These are diuretics and contribute to dry eyes.

Along with dietary changes, you can also help alleviate symptoms of dry eye by using the following tips:

- 1) Keep vents A/C ducts, etc. from blowing in your face
- 2) Turn off overhead fans in the room where you are sitting or resting
- 3) Keep a humidifier on in the bedroom
- 4) Reduce contact lens wearing time
- 5) Wear large or wrap around sunglasses when outdoors



Nearly 40% of Americans experience Dry Eye Syndrome.

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CHANCE TO WIN.

Sharper Vision

I Need Bifocals? A Story of Denial

It was a brisk winter day here at Sharper Vision. Busy as can be, the staff bustling to and fro when suddenly the door opens, and a very trendy "Sally" walks to the check-in for her appointment.

While waiting to see the doctor, she browses the multitude of fashionable frames enjoying the bright colors, textures, and styles on her face shape.

She is greeted by a technician and proceeds to pretest with a smile on her face and a vision complaint on her tongue. When asked how her vision has been, Sally takes a deep breath and mutters the unthinkable "I can't read small print anymore."

The technician smiles back with a knowing grin and documents Sally's complaint in her chart.

After pretest Sally is placed into the exam room and is greeted by Dr. Gottlieb.

A half hour passes and the telling sound of a bell signals an optician that Sally is ready to choose her new glasses. Optician X opens the door and Dr. Gottlieb explains a condition called presbyopia (the need for reading glasses) which happens to every person at some point and tells Sally her options including the dreaded word "bifocal."

Sally has an overwhelming sense of doom as she heads out to the optical. "Oh no, I have to have an ugly LINE, Everyone will KNOW I'm getting older, Oh no no no!"

Full of trepidation, Sally feels her heart racing, her palms sweating. Yes, at this point Sally was in full blown bifocal denial.

Optician X sensing her reluctance smiles and proceeds to pull colorful, interesting and beautiful pieces off the frame boards and place them in front of her.

Sally is taken aback and says "I can't wear these! They are so pretty! Didn't you hear the Doctor? I have to wear BIFOCALS!"

Optician X simply smiled and explained to Sally all the new technology, and what a progressive lens (no line bifocal) looks like, and how much it would help her do her paperwork.

Sally starts to relax and realizes that she can still enjoy beautiful, sassy glasses AND have her best vision without the world knowing she is wearing a (*gasp*) bifocal.

Goodies with Gottlieb

Did you know that over 12 million American children suffer from visual impairment? The American Optometry Association strongly encourages parents to schedule their child's first eye examination by the age of 6 months.

After that, as children fine tune their visual systems over the next three years, preschoolers should have another eye exam prior to entering school. If children show no signs of problems (squinting, head-tilting, reading difficulty, etc.) exams every 2-3 years should suffice. Children whose vision needs correction should have annual exams.

A visual problem can also restrict a child's ability to learn. Did you know that 1 in every 4 children has an undiagnosed visual problem? Because a child typically does NOT complain of symptoms such as blurred vision or poor hand-eye coordination, it is crucial for parents to schedule routine eye health exams for their children.

During these exams, we will check the visual system to ensure he or she sees correctly and has normal eye health, uses his/her eyes together correctly, and can focus quickly and accurately at a variety of distances.

Additionally, the leading cause of

eye injuries in children is participation in sports. Children should wear protective eyewear while participating any type of sport or recreational activities. Sunglasses are also highly recommended as most UV damage occurs between the ages of infancy to 12 years of age.

An annual eye exam is the key to a lifetime of healthy vision for your children.