

WOMEN'S EYE HEALTH & SAFETY MONTH



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EXPECTANT MOTHERS SHOULD BE
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Pregnancy brings an increase in hormones that may cause changes in vision. In most cases, these are temporary conditions that will return to normal after delivery.

As an expectant mother, be aware of vision changes during pregnancy and see an eye care provider for an eye exam. You can have your eyes safely dilated while you are pregnant.

These are some changes that may occur:

Refractive Changes: Changes in hormone levels can alter the strength you need in your eyeglasses or contact lenses.

Dry Eyes: Some women experience dry eyes during pregnancy, which may be temporary and goes away after delivery.

Migraines: These are linked to hormonal changes during pregnancy. Painful migraine headaches make eyes feel more sensitive to light.

Diabetes: Women who are diabetic before their pregnancy and those who develop gestational diabetes need to watch their vision closely. Blurred vision in such cases may indicate elevated blood sugar levels.

High Blood Pressure: Women may have blurry vision or spots in front of their eyes, which can be caused by an increase in blood pressure. At excessive levels, this can cause retinal detachment.

Glaucoma: Women being treated for glaucoma should tell their doctor if they are pregnant or intend to become pregnant because certain glaucoma medications may interfere with the baby's development.

Please consult with your eye care provider and primary care provider about any vision changes or concern when you are pregnant or intend to become pregnant.

(Source: preventblindness.org)

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR EYES HEALTHY

A study conducted by Prevent Blindness America (PBA) and the National Eye Institute (NEI) shows that of the more than 3.6 million Americans age 40 and older who suffer from visual impairment, including blindness, 2.3 million are women.

Women are more susceptible to vision issues due to longevity as well as hormonal factors, according to the NEI. To educate the public, PBA has designated April as Women's Eye Health and Safety Month.

Below are some tips from PBA for women to keep their eyes healthy:

- ✧ Get an eye exam – make regular eye exams part of your health routine and follow up care, as recommended by an eye care professional
- ✧ Know your family history – genetics plays a key role in certain eye diseases so knowing your family's health history may help you and your eye care professional
- ✧ Eat healthy – a diet rich in beta carotene, lutein, zeaxanthin, zinc and omega-3 fatty acids can help guard against vision loss from eye disease
- ✧ Quit smoking – smoking, even second-hand smoke, increases the risk of eye disease
- ✧ Wear UV eye protection - UV rays are extremely dangerous to the eyes and have been linked to the development of cataracts and AMD later in life so wearing brimmed hats in conjunction with UV-rated sunglasses will help lessen the harmful effects

(Source: Prevent Blindness America)



HOW TO USE COSMETICS SAFELY AROUND YOUR EYES



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While many eye cosmetics are safe, misusing certain products can sometimes lead to infection and, in rare cases, even blindness. Knowing what to look for, and how to use cosmetics, can help protect your eyes.

Here are six things you can do to use makeup safely and protect your eyes:

Before applying makeup, be sure your face and eyelids are very clean. You can spread bacteria from your hands to your eyes, so be sure to wash your hands before applying makeup. Also, regularly clean any makeup instruments, such as an eyelash curler or makeup brush, with soap and water.

Throw away eye makeup after three months. Infection-causing bacteria grow easily in creamy or liquid eye makeup. To keep track of a product's shelf life, use tape or a sticker to write the date on your cosmetics.

Never share eye makeup, even with family or close friends as this can lead to a spread of infection. When sampling makeup in stores, be sure to ask for a disposable applicator, such as a cotton swab.

Don't color inside the lines. Always apply makeup outside the lash line, away from the eye, to avoid blocking the oil glands of the upper or lower eyelid. These glands secrete oil that protects the eye's surface.

Be careful with metallic, glitter, or sparkle powder. Flakes can fall into the eye, get into the tear film, and irritate your eyes. Glitter eye makeup is a common cause of corneal irritation or infection, especially for people who wear contact lenses. Larger glitter or inclusions in makeup can scratch the eye, much like getting sand or dirt in your eye.

Remove all eye makeup before bed, especially mascara that can stick to the lashes. Sleeping with eye makeup on can clog oil-producing glands and may lead to infection. Whatever eye makeup remover you use, avoid getting it in your eyes.

Above all, if any eye cosmetic causes irritation or dry eye, stop using it immediately. If irritation persists, or you have other eye problems, be sure to see an eye care provider right away.

(Source: American Academy of Ophthalmology)

Did you know that about 2/3 of visual impairments happen to women?

Here are a few tips to maintaining good eye health:

- schedule regular eye exams
- know family history of any health/eye diseases
- eat healthy
- quit smoking
- wear UV eye protection
- use eye cosmetics safely
- expectant women need to be aware of vision changes during pregnancy and see an eye care provider for an eye exam

We know you're busy! But it's so important that women make their vision health a priority to help detect vision issues early. Early and consistent treatment for most eye diseases can significantly reduce the risk of vision loss.

(Source: preventblindness.org)

