

HEALTH & SAFETY

Your optometrist knows your eyes inside and out (329 words + 1 photo)

(NC)—Here's a Q&A with Dr. Lillian Linton, Canadian Optometrist and President Elect of the Canadian Association of Optometrists.

Q. Dear Dr. Linton, I spend a lot of time working in front of the computer. My eyes have become dry and itchy, and very sensitive to the light in my office. Do you have any tips for me?

A. You are not alone – on average Canadians are spending 7-8 hours a day in front of a digital screen, and this prolonged exposure is leading to an increased number of Canadians with various eye and vision problems. These eye problems often describe a condition called CVS or computer vision syndrome. Symptoms of CVS can include not only dry and itchy eyes and oversensitivity to bright light, but also headaches, eye strain and fatigue.

Try the "20-20-20 RULE" recommended by the Canadian Association of Optometrists. Every 20 minutes of screen time, take a 20 second break and focus your eyes on something 20 feet away.

Be computer smart and visit www.opto.ca for more helpful tips on how to take the sting out of computer use.

Q. Dear Dr. Linton, I am 45 years old, and I don't remember the last time I had my eyes checked. How do I find an optometrist in my area?

A. Optometrists are primary health-care providers in eye and vision health and encourage comprehensive eye exams to help detect, minimize and treat eye and vision conditions. Many eye diseases have no symptoms and may go undetected. Without identification and treatment certain conditions can lead to permanent vision impairment or vision loss.

Recent data by Canadian optometrists revealed that 40 per cent of Canadian baby boomers, aged 45 to 54 are reporting eye and vision complaints associated with prolonged use of digital screens, including eye strain and headaches.

Considering you fall into this age range, it's important that you have your eyes checked regularly.

By visiting www.opto.ca you will be able to find an optometrist in your area.

- News Canada

An optometrist knows your eyes inside and out



Be Kind To Your Eyes

Tips for minimizing computer vision syndrome (290 words + 1 photo)

(NC)—Computer vision syndrome or CVS is a condition described by the Canadian Association of Optometrists as various eye and vision symptoms associated with prolonged exposure to digital screens, including computers, television, Blackberries, and cell phones. Symptoms of computer vision syndrome can include eye strain and fatigue, blurred, irritated and dry eyes, double vision and headaches. The majority of Canadians may not even realize they have this condition.

With the evolution of technology, more and more Canadians are spending time on digital screens, a significant increase from five years ago. While it's difficult to avoid the modern day conveniences these technological devices provide, it's important to minimize any strain to your eyes.

Consider these suggestions and give your eyes the break they need.

Follow the 20-20-20 Rule

The Canadian Association of Optometrists recommends for every 20 minutes of screen time, take a 20 second break to blink and focus your eyes on something 20 feet away. This will give your eyes a much-needed break and reduce some of the symptoms mentioned earlier.

Screen Smarts

Take a few seconds to adjust the brightness and contrast of your digital screen.

The brightness and contrast should be set at comfortable intensity so that the letters are easily read.

Lighting can make all the difference

Room lighting should be diffused to reduce glare and reflections from your screen. Diffused lighting will help minimize screen glares that may cause squinting and eye strain.

Press "OFF"

If you experience any CVS symptoms, turn off your digital screen and visit your optometrist for a comprehensive eye exam. Ask your optometrist if your glasses are up to date and describe any symptoms you may be experiencing. Your eyes will thank you.

For more information on computer vision syndrome, and to find an optometrist, please visit www.opto.ca.

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What women need to know about high screen time (320 words + 1 photo)

(NC)—The evolution of modern technologies have changed the landscape in which people communicate, do their jobs and function in daily life. However, this technology evolution has led to a significant increase in the amount of time Canadians spend in front of digital screens over the past five years. What's more, the average user of these technological conveniences is not just children or young adults. In fact, the Canadian baby boomer population is spending at least 7 1/2 hours a day in front of potentially eye-straining devices.

New Leger Marketing data indicates that compared to five years ago, women baby-boomers, aged 45-54 are reporting higher usage of eye-straining devices versus male boomers and as a result are reporting more eye and vision ailments than other age groups. These eye problems are often described as CVS, computer vision syndrome, and if left untreated can lead to increased discomfort and eye and vision strain.

While technologies create the opportunity to simplify the chaos of everyday life, more and more women are depending on their computers and Blackberries to keep track of their family's appointments and whereabouts. In the evening, sitting down at the computer or in front of the television provides an escape from a long day, but adds to the strain on their eyes.

Try these helpful tips to minimize eye strain:

- Follow the "20-20-20 RULE". Every 20 minutes of screen time, take a 20 second break to blink and focus your eyes on something 20 feet away.
- Be kind to your eyes and schedule routine eye exams to maintain eye and vision health. If you wear glasses, ensure they are up to date and suit your screen-time habits.

Eye and vision health conditions do not always come with recognizable symptoms and may go undetected. Comprehensive eye exams help detect, minimize and treat symptoms associated with computer vision syndrome. To find an optometrist in your area please visit www.opto.ca.

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