

Hello and welcome to our June 2021 edition of our Falls Prevention newsletter

Looking after your eyes



Our eyes are highly specialised organs that take in the light reflected off our surroundings and transform it into electrical impulses to send to the brain.

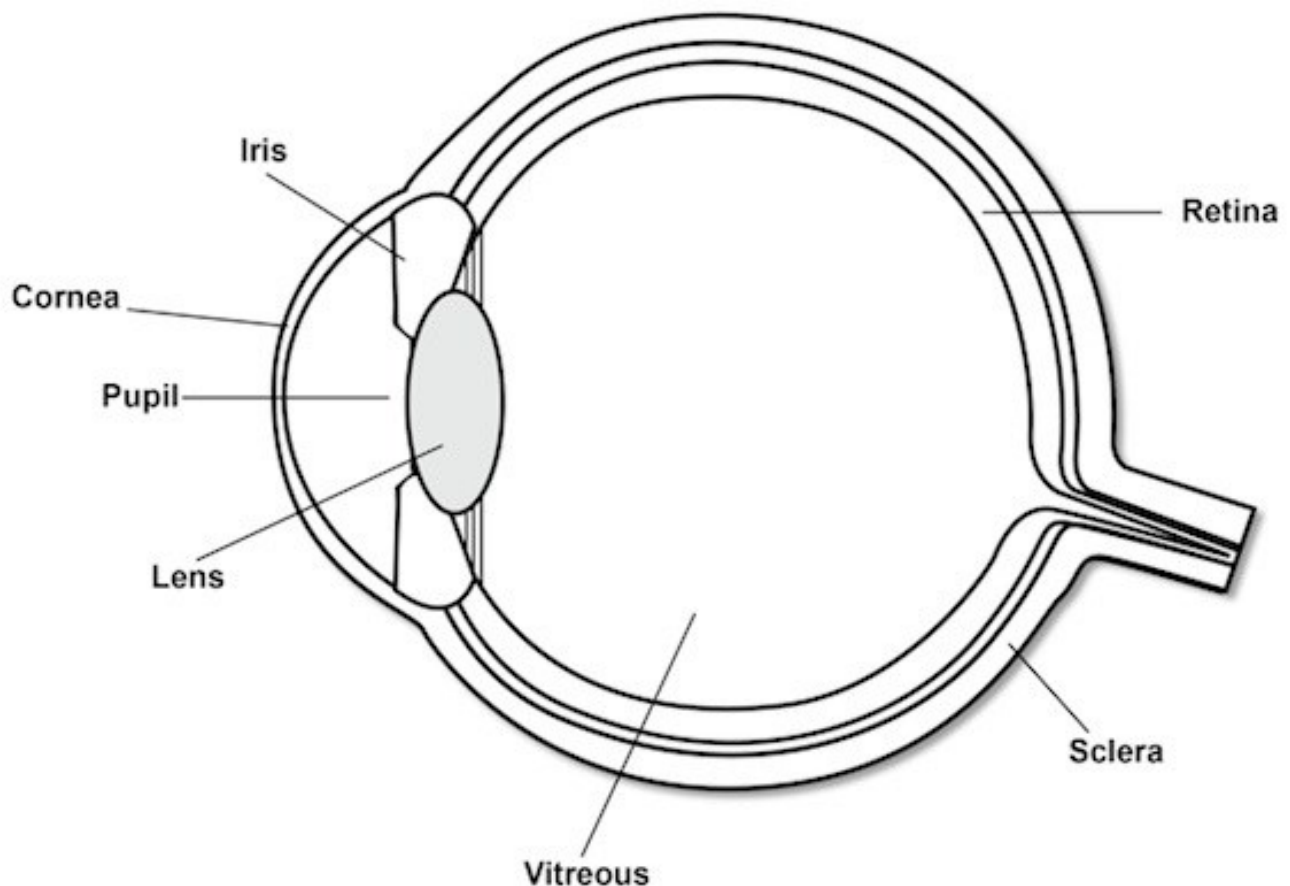
Light enters our eyes through the pupil, then passes through a lens and the fluid-filled vitreous body before it is projected onto the retina.

What's weird is, the projected image is actually upside down, the brain is able to flip it for us, so we don't get turned around!



How well do you know your eyes?

Eye anatomy



Basically, the role of the eye is to convert light into electrical signals called nerve impulses that the brain converts into images of our surroundings. Light rays pass through the pupil in the cornea.

Aqueous humour – maintains the pressure in your eye and nourishes the cornea and the lens by supplying amino acids and glucose, as well as vitamin C.

Choroid – a thin layer of blood vessels that nourish the retina and absorb scattered light.

Ciliary muscles – a circular muscle that relaxes or tightens to enable the lens to change shape for focusing.

Cornea – a clear covering on the front of your eye that focuses light entering the eye.

Fovea – a tiny pit in the macula that provides the sharp central vision that you need for activities, such as reading and driving.

Iris – the coloured part of your eye that regulates the amount of light entering.

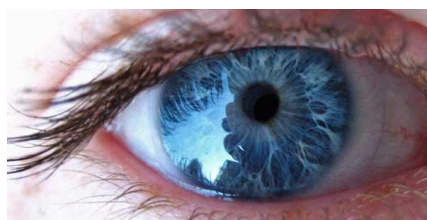
Lens – the clear part of the eye behind the iris that helps to focus light, or an image, onto the retina.

Macula – the sensitive area in the centre of the retina responsible for what you see ahead of you (central vision).

Optic nerve – a bundle of more than one million nerve fibres that carries visual messages from the retina to the brain.

Pupil – this is the opening in the centre of the iris that lets in light. It is regulated by the iris.

Retina – the light-sensitive tissue lining at the back of your eye that converts light into electrical impulses that are sent along the optic nerve to the brain.

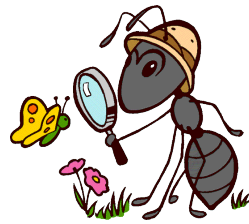


Falls

Across the UK, falls are the most common cause of hospitalisation for people aged over 65, and of accidental death in those aged over 75. Undetected and untreated problems with vision play a significant role in older people falling. As we get older, we lose the ability to focus on things that are close-up (presbyopia) and find it harder, for example, to read menus or the labels on packets, messages on our phone screens or books and newspapers. We also find that we need more light to see things clearly and that it takes longer to adapt to changing lighting conditions.

You are most at risk of falling if you:

- have poor vision



- are aged over 75



- have fallen before
- have Parkinson's disease, arthritis, diabetes, Meniere's disease or dementia
- are taking sedatives, antidepressants or more than four prescription medicines a day



There are a lot of things you can do to reduce your risk of falling:

- Make sure you have good lighting, for example a lamp near the chair where you sit to read, and that you turn it on as soon as it is getting dark.



- Make sure that your carpets are well fitted so there are no trip hazards, such as creases, in them. Rugs can be made secure by using rug grips and non-slip underlay.

- Wear suitable footwear indoors and outside.



- Use contrast to make things easier to see, for example, a dark toilet seat and dark bathroom floor if you have a white toilet, and contrasting edging to mark out steps and stairs.



- Wear sunglasses that absorb the UV light or a hat with a brim, to shield you from the sunlight.

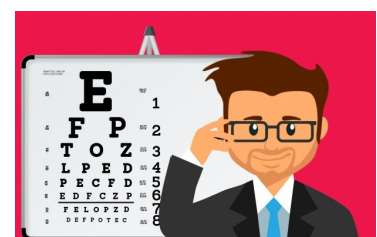


- If you wear glasses for distance (watching television, walking about and so on), make sure you keep them on when you are walking outside your home.



- If you wear bifocals or varifocals, even if you are used to them, using a pair of single vision glasses to wear outdoors may reduce your risk of falling. If your glasses prescription is not very strong you may find it easier to walk about without your glasses on. Your optician will be able to advise you about this.

Make sure you have regular eye examinations – especially if you notice changes to your vision. If you are over the age of 60, you are entitled to a free NHS sight test.



Looking after your eyes is a year-round priority. In winter, dry office air, spending too much time at your computer or watching TV, and poor eating habits can all contribute to eye irritation. During summer, our eyes are especially vulnerable to harmful UV light, but according to research, up to 20 million people in the UK may be putting their eye health at risk by not checking the UV rating when they buy sunglasses on the high street.



Exposure to the UV light emitted by the sun can contribute to cataracts and macular degeneration – even during the winter months.

A good pair of sunglasses can help keep your eyes safe – not just during the summer but also on bright and chilly December days.



Not all sunglasses protect you from harmful UV rays though, so make sure to do your research before picking up a pair of cheap but fashionable high street shades.



Look for a pair that offer 100% protection against both UVA and UVB rays – it should usually indicate this on the label, but ask your optician if you're not sure. The more coverage from your sunglasses, the better the protection too – so swerve the tiny sunnies trend and opt for some oversized aviators instead.

Tears



Tears have three main components; a watery component, an oily component and mucus. These create a film which covers the white of the eye and the cornea. A problem with any of the three layers may cause dry eye.

According to Eye Health UK, DIY activity in the home and garden is the cause of more than 20,000 eye injuries each year. Some of these have led to serious permanent eye damage and loss of sight. Make sure you protect your eyes whenever and wherever you are doing DIY:

- **Wear protective eyewear** for activities where there is a risk of objects or liquids entering your eye, for example when hammering, drilling, welding, painting ceilings or laying insulation. Ordinary glasses and sunglasses do not offer good enough protection. Invest in good quality goggles or safety glasses that conform to the European Standard BSEN 166. Your optometrist can prescribe prescription safety goggles.



- **Don't touch your face until you have washed your hands**, otherwise you could transfer dust or chemicals to your eyes.



- **Do not work alone** – always have some else available in case you need help.

- **Keep a first aid kit and phone handy.**



In the case of an accident:

- Do not rub your eye. This may make matters worse.
- Go to A&E as soon as possible.
- Never wash a cut or punctured eye. Cuts should be bandaged lightly if possible. Abrasions will need hospital treatment with drops, ointments and a sterile pad over the eye for at least 24 hours. Lacerations are far more painful and may require medication and eye ointment and stitching of any torn tissue.



Looking at TVs, laptops, tablets and smartphones can cause eyestrain – early stage research has found that the blue light they emit can be harmful to the eyes, causing digital eyestrain and potentially retina damage.

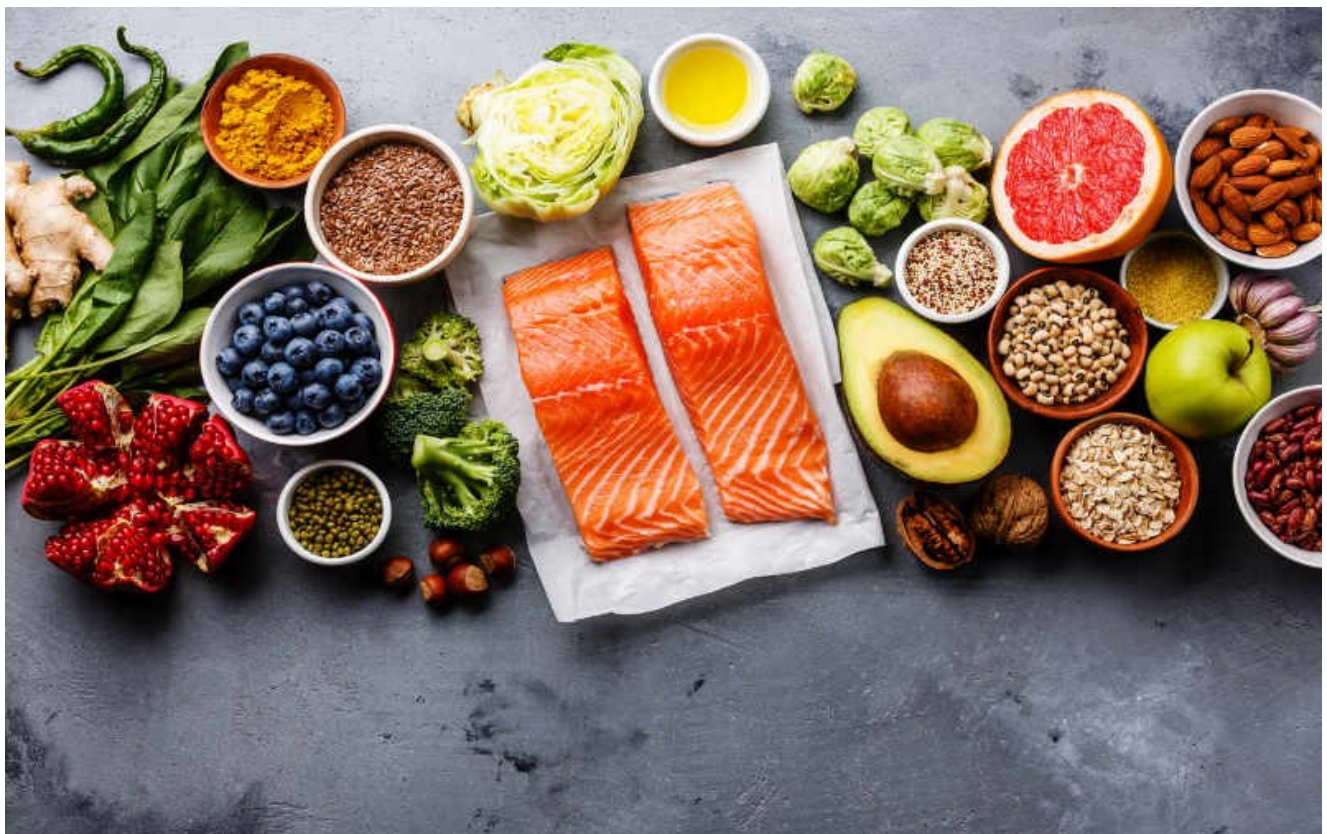
The best way to avoid redness? Take a proper screen break; make a cup of tea, chat to a colleague or head outside to some fresh air outside. The HSE (Health & Safety Executive) suggests short, frequent breaks are better than less frequent, longer breaks.

Try following the 20-20-20 rule when you're in the office or using a computer or tablet at home. This means for every 20 minutes you look at a screen, you should gaze at something that is at least 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.



Eat well for better eye health

Eating a wide variety of fruit and vegetables, including dark green leaves, is good for your general health and may support good eye health. Eating healthily will help you to maintain a healthy weight, which helps keep your blood pressure under control.





Healthy Food

B	A	K	A	P	R	I	C	O	T	S	K	U	C
R	R	B	R	L	C	O	D	N	L	L	S	M	H
E	T	R	A	E	R	L	N	A	U	I	N	T	E
A	I	O	S	M	A	T	S	I	P	V	M	W	R
D	C	C	P	O	N	R	Q	L	O	P	O	E	R
O	H	O	B	N	B	G	U	Y	V	N	L	U	Y
P	O	L	E	C	E	B	A	N	A	N	A	E	T
S	L	L	R	B	R	F	S	F	M	C	V	S	O
A	E	I	R	X	R	P	H	L	I	R	O	E	M
L	S	M	Y	N	Y	D	D	O	L	A	C	C	A
M	Y	O	G	U	R	T	I	Q	K	B	A	H	T
O	A	H	S	P	I	N	A	C	H	P	D	E	O
N	X	F	I	G	A	R	L	I	C	A	O	E	V
M	D	C	P	L	S	H	E	L	L	F	I	S	H
I	N	C	A	N	T	A	L	O	U	P	E	E	Q
P	E	A	N	U	T	S	M	G	I	N	G	E	R

MILK
YOGURT
APPLE
BANANA
BROCOLLI
CHERRY
CHEESE
BREAD
APRICOTS

AVOCADO
CANTALOUPE
RASPBERRY
TOMATO
CRANBERRY
LEMON
LIME
FIG
ONION

ARTICHOLES
GINGER
SPINACH
SQUASH
GARLIC
PEANUTS
SHELLFISH
SALMON
CRAB



There are lots of sayings, myths and misconceptions about eyes and eyesight. Here to help sort fact from fiction are some of the most common ones:

Reading in the dark or dim light will damage your eyes

Fiction. It is more difficult to see in the dark or in dim light than in brighter light, so you may get a headache if you read in the dark, but you will not cause yourself any harm.

Contact lenses can get lost behind your eyes

Fiction. The membrane that covers the white of your eye (the conjunctiva) also lines your eyelids, so it is impossible for a contact lens to get lost behind your eyes.

Wearing someone else's glasses may damage your eyes

Fiction. Although you may not be able to see very well with them and may get a headache or double vision, you won't come to any harm from wearing glasses that are not your prescription. However, you should only ever wear glasses that are your prescription when you drive.

Watching TV too much or too closely will damage your eyes

Fiction: Watching too much TV or sitting very close to it may make your eyes tired or give you a headache – particularly if you are watching TV in the dark – but won't cause any permanent damage.

Exercising the eye muscles can allow you to 'throw away your glasses'

Fiction: People normally need glasses because of the shape and size of their eye. Exercises won't help this.

Studying the iris in a person's eye, reveals their health problems

Fiction: There is no scientific proof for this. However, when optometrists carry out eye examinations they not only test your sight, but also check the health of your eyes and look for signs of some general health problems.

Using your eyes too much can wear them out

Fiction: The health of your eyes has nothing to do with the number of hours you use them.

Holding books up close will damage your child's eyes

Fiction: How your child holds a book has no effect on the health of their eyes and doesn't necessarily mean they need glasses. Sometimes children find it more comfortable to read close-up and their very good focusing ability makes it easy for them to do so. However, if your child sits too close to the television, it may mean that they have difficulty seeing further away. Take them to an optician.

Eating carrots will improve your eyesight

Some fact. Carrots are a source of vitamin A, which is important for the eyes – and should be part of a well-balanced diet that supports your all-round health. Poor nutrition has been implicated in diseases such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD).



Have we got all your details?

If we haven't already done so, Teresa, Anne and Nicola will be contacting you over the next few weeks and making sure that we have all your correct details, next of kin, emergency contact, mobile number, and email (if you have them), etc. so you might want to jot them down on a piece of paper and keep it handy for when we ring you!



Mobile telephone number

Email address

Next of kin/Emergency contact name

Emergency telephone number

Permission to share data in emergency

Thank you



Contact Numbers

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Neil Wise 07720 613920

Nicola Shore 07859 355954

Notes

As lockdown restrictions ease further remember:

- Continue to maintain social distancing, wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face.
- The fewer social interactions you have, the lower your risk of catching COVID-19.
- Your risk of catching COVID-19 is lower if you meet people outdoors.
- If you meet indoors, keep the area well ventilated with fresh air, for example by opening the window. Remember to wipe door handles and frequently touched surfaces.

Keep Safe

