



# TAKECHARGE

WELCOA'S SELF-CARE BULLETIN

## We're Keeping an Eye on Your Health

### WORKPLACE EYE WELLNESS MONTH

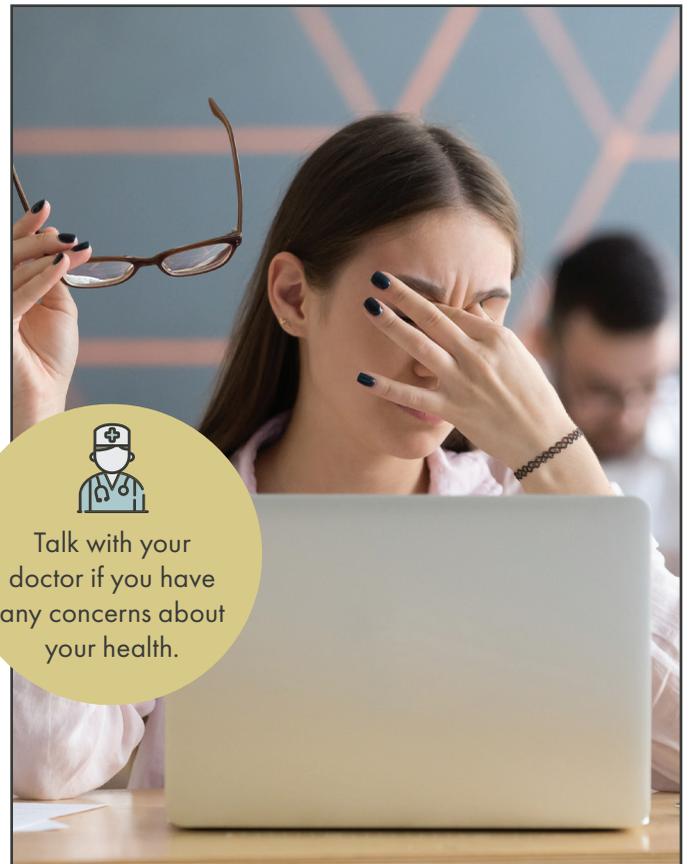
When you think about eye safety what are the first industries that come to mind? Construction? Factory Work? Mining? You would be right. They are some of the highest risk jobs for eye injuries. However, did you know that auto repair, retail, hospitality workers, and yes, you, could also be at risk?

#### ACCORDING TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY INSTITUTE:

- » More than 2,000 workers injure their eyes at work each day
- » That equals an estimated 730,000 workers in one year
- » Eye injuries cost more than \$3 million per year in the loss of production time, medical expenses, and worker compensation
- » 10-20% of all work-related industries will cause temporary or permanent vision loss

Now you could be thinking to yourself, well I am not in any of those industries, so it will not impact me right? Wrong.

In June 2020, the New York Post reported that before the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the average American spends an estimated 44 years of their lives staring at screens. That is around 17 hours each day before states started to mandate restricted travel and stay-in-place orders.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

After restrictions were put into place, it jumped another +2 hours and 3 out of 4 Americans surveyed said they would have been lost without their laptops, televisions, and smart devices. In addition, 60% of the people admitted they have argued with their partner over screen time habits.

Take a minute to check your own smart device and laptop use. Has it increased over the last year or stayed the same? How about your family?

Prevent Blindness, one of the oldest volunteer eye health and safety groups, designated March to be Workplace Eye Wellness Month, to raise awareness about what you can do to maintain healthy eyes, no matter where your work takes you.

## EASY TIPS YOU CAN START USING RIGHT NOW

- » **Use the 20-20-20 Rule:** 7 out of 10 adults say their eyes start to feel strained from looking at the screen too much. Every 20 minutes look at something 20 feet away from you for about 20 seconds.
- » **Protect your eyes from blue light exposure:** Blue light itself is not bad, it's only when you are overexposed that it can cause dry, sore or irritated eyes, difficulty focusing, and fatigue. Use a blue light screen filter on your smartphone, tablet, and laptop screen, computer glasses with yellow-tinted lenses or anti-reflective lens that reduce glare and increase contrast.
- » **Know Your Environment:** Assess your work area and choose the right protective eyewear for that job. Safety glasses with side protection if you work around dust or flying debris, goggles if you handle chemicals, face shield or helmet if you are using welding, lasers or fiber optic equipment. All safety equipment should comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.
- » **Plan For An Emergency:** Whether you are working at home or in an office, you should have a plan in place in case there is an emergency. In a workplace environment, have eyewash stations that are easy to get to and make sure someone has advanced first aid training. At home, make sure you wear safety equipment when working with machines or hazardous materials.
- » **Put It In Writing and Review Regularly:** Once your plan is in place, write it down and display it where you and others can see it. Regularly review the plan to make sure you, your co-workers, and family are being proactive with your eye care.

Want another fun way to learn more about workplace eye safety? Take the Prevent Blindness 10 question quiz to see how you score and share these insights with your friends, family, and coworkers.

[https://preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/MK32\\_WorkSafetyQuiz\\_1.pdf](https://preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/MK32_WorkSafetyQuiz_1.pdf)

