



Looking after your eyes



It's important we do not take our eyes for granted. They are, after all, the only pair we have got. In fact, many of us admit to leaving it for months, or even years before seeking help after noticing our eyesight has deteriorated.

Here are some top tips on how to look after your eyes:

Have a regular eye checkup

For people without eye diseases or specific risk factors, examinations with a registered eye care practitioner (optometrist or ophthalmologist) are recommended every two years.

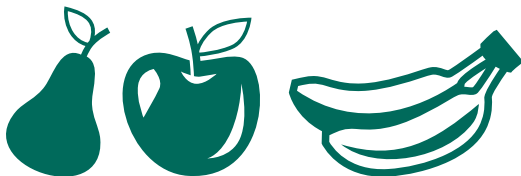
If you are over 40, or have a particular eye condition you may need to be checked more regularly.



Protect your eyes from UV light

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light is known to contribute to eye diseases including cataracts, pterygium and age related macular degeneration. Protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses with good UV protection and a hat to reduce UV exposure.

Most prescription spectacle lenses have good UV protection. Speak to your optometrist about whether additional UV protection is required for you.



Maintain a healthy lifestyle

A diet high in anti-oxidants (e.g. from green leafy vegetables), omega 3 fatty acids (e.g. fish, linseeds), various vitamins (including Vitamins E and C) and minerals (including Zinc and Selenium) can help prevent or slow progression of macular degeneration in some people.

Good eating habits combined with exercise help prevent diabetes, which is a significant cause of vision loss in Australia.

Do not smoke. Smoking has been linked to macular degeneration and is also a cause of cardiovascular disease, which may impact the eyes and your vision.

Protect your eyes from hazards

60% of eye injuries happen at work and most incidents are preventable. When at work, follow directions to lower shields on machinery and wear safety glasses.



Rest your eyes

Working for hours on a computer, tablet or mobile phone can lead to computer eye strain. Put a reminder on your computer to take a 2-3 minute break from the screen every 45 minutes.



Do not let hay fever ruin your day

Hay fever is the most common chronic respiratory condition in Australia, affecting 15% of Australians or about 3.1 million people (Australian Institute of Health Welfare 2011).

Hay fever is the common name for a condition called allergic rhinitis, which means an allergy that affects the nose. Most people associate hay fever with spring, when airborne pollens from grass are at their peak, however, hay fever can occur at any time of the year. The symptoms of hay fever include sneezing, a runny nose and itchy eyes which are triggered by an allergic reaction to grass, tree and weed pollen as well as other particles in the air. In some cases, the symptoms of hay fever can be so severe that a person can not sleep or concentrate, and may feel tired or unwell.

Suggestions to prevent or limit symptoms of hay fever include:

- ▶ Check the pollen count forecast on television, in the newspaper or at www.asthmaaustralia.org.au. An increased pollen count in the air can be a major contributing factor causing hay fever. Try to stay indoors if it is a high count.
- ▶ Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes and a mask when doing work outdoors.

- ▶ Stay indoors as much as possible in spring, on windy days or after thunderstorms.
- ▶ In your garden, choose plants that are pollinated by birds or insects, rather than plants that release their seeds into the air.
- ▶ Replace your lawn with types of artificial grass, bricked or paved areas.
- ▶ Splash your eyes often with cold water to flush out any pollen.
- ▶ Reduce your exposure to dust and dust mites, animals and animal hair or fur (dander).

In recent consumer research, 53% of people had never consulted a doctor for their hay fever symptoms. See your doctor today for advice and support on preventing hay fever or reducing your symptoms.

Sweet Potato Muffins

These muffins are perfect for brekkie, or a healthy snack throughout the day.

Ingredients:

- ▶ Olive oil
- ▶ 600g sweet potatoes
- ▶ 4 spring onions
- ▶ 1-2 fresh red chillies
- ▶ 6 large free-range eggs
- ▶ 3 tablespoons cottage cheese
- ▶ 250g wholemeal self-raising flour
- ▶ 50g parmesan cheese
- ▶ 1 tablespoon sunflower seeds
- ▶ 1 tablespoon pumpkin seeds

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line 12-hole muffin tins with paper cases and then lightly spray with non-stick spray or wipe each one with oiled kitchen paper. Peel the sweet potatoes and coarsely grate into a large bowl. Trim the spring onions, then finely slice the chilli and add to the bowl, reserving half the chilli to one side. Crack in the eggs, add the cottage cheese and flour, then finely grate in most of the parmesan and season with sea salt and black pepper. Mix until nicely combined.

Evenly divide the muffin mixture between the cases. Sprinkle over the seeds, then dot over the reserved slices of chilli. Use the remaining parmesan to give a light dusting of cheese over each one, and then bake at the bottom of the oven for 45 to 50 minutes, or until golden and set.

These are amazing served warm 5 minutes after taking them out of the oven, and good kept in the fridge for a couple of days. Also suitable to freeze.



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