

# Eye Essentials



## **Eye Care in Children**

Eyes are one of the most important organs in the human body and vision is one of the most wonderful gifts. But often many people neglect the importance of eye care and don't pay proper attention towards eye care, only to regret later on in life. Maintaining good vision and taking care of eyes is a relatively simple task.

In my day to day clinical practice, we get a lot of pediatric patients having eye problems that are noticed by parents pretty late. Also injury related eye problems are very common in children. Parents are very apprehensive and have lots of doubts and myths regarding eye care and eye diseases in their kids. The aim of this article is to make all parents understand the art of taking care of their child's eyes and ensuring perfect sight for the greater part of their lives.

## **Frequently asked questions by the parents are:**

How will we know my child has some vision problem or spectacle number?

When should my child undergo first eye examination?

What are common eye problems in children?

What medicines or nutrients to be given to decrease my child's spectacle number?

Let me clear their queries one after other:

## **What are common eye diseases in children?**

Refractive errors (spectacle), Lazy Eye disease (amblyopia), Squint, Eye Allergies, Watering of Eyes, Eye Injuries etc.

All of the above conditions warrant periodic eye examination.

## **When should a child go for an Eye checkup? How will we know my child has some vision problem or spectacle number?**

A child should get his eye checked if he/she

- has cross eyes (squint)
- holds object close to eyes
- goes very near to TV while watching
- can't see blackboard clearly at school
- eyes that itch, burns or feel scratchy
- excessively rubs eyes, blinks or squints after close work
- becomes tired after reading for short time
- complains that things are looking blurry
- one or both parents have glasses
- white or yellow reflex in the eye
- In a "seemingly" normal child, it is recommended to have an eye checkup at 3 to 5 years of age and then as required.

## **What medicines or nutrients to be given to decrease my child's spectacle number?**

Carrots are rich in Vitamin A, which is essential for sight, however a well-balanced diet, provides all the nutrients necessary for good vision. Carrots, Spinach, Green leafy vegetables, papaya, mango, milk, cod liver oil etc. are rich in Vitamin A. But carrots or any of the above mentioned food items have no role in the increase or decrease in spectacle number. In young age, in otherwise normal

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eyes, change in spectacle number is related to shape and size of the eyeball and there are no nutrients or medicines that can decrease the eye number.

## Useful tips for eye care in children

- Children should take a well-balanced diet, rich in Vitamin A like milk, papaya, carrot, spinach, green leafy vegetables, mango etc.
- Good sound sleep of at least 8 hours is a must for every child.
- They should cultivate good habits while studying i.e. good posture and adequate light.
- Children should watch TV from a distance of at least 6 feet. Excessive TV watching or playing games on the computers will lead to eye strain/ fatigue.
- Take small breaks after an hour of studying.
- Keep child away from pointed objects, chemicals, medicines, cosmetics etc. to avoid any kind of eye trauma.
- Don't instill any eye drops in the child's eyes without consulting eye specialists.