

Hello...and thank you for joining me for Health, Habits and Wellness. I am Shannon Spiller Physician Associate and Lifestyle Coach Practitioner.

Our topic - Healthy Vision

July is national Healthy Vision Month. According to a recent Eye-Q® Survey nearly all Americans believe their eye health is just as important as their heart health, but nearly half, ages 23-38, do not think they need an eye exam if their vision is clear,

A comprehensive eye examination can detect early signs of conditions or diseases such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, glaucoma, macular degeneration, Graves' disease, autoimmune disorders, cancer, tumors and is **the only way to visualize the blood vessels behind the eye**. Eye exams should be done annual. Some eye condition may require more frequent visits, your ophthalmologist will let you know if you need be seen more often.

Early detection is key and since many vision issues show no obvious signs or symptoms, the only way to truly get the “all-clear!” is by having an annual check-up. Your doctor will ask about your overall health and family history, eye or vision symptoms, medications, and potential work-related or environmental issues that may affect your vision. Your visit may include tests such as depth perception, color vision, eye muscle movements, peripheral or side vision, and how your pupils respond to light.

Health conditions, like diabetes or high blood pressure, can also increase your risk of some eye diseases. For example, people with diabetes are at risk for diabetic retinopathy — an eye condition that can cause vision loss and blindness

Other risk factors include

- aging
- family history of eye disease
- ethnicity such as African American, Hispanic, or Native American

Know your family's health history. Talk with your family members to find out if they have had any eye problems. Some eye diseases and conditions run in families, like age-related macular degeneration or glaucoma. Be sure to tell your eye doctor of any family history of eye disease.

If you are worried you might be at risk for some eye diseases, talk to your doctor. You may be able to take steps to lower your risk.

Protecting your overall health can go a long way toward keeping your eyes healthy! It is important to make healthy choices and take good care of yourself

Keep in mind that healthy habits like eating well and being active can promote health and prevent diseases that can lead to eye or vision problems.

Along with whole grains, legumes, and low-fat animal proteins; eating green leafy vegetables like kale, spinach & collards; foods high in Omega 3 like salmon, flax seeds, walnuts & soybeans; as well as eating eggs, nuts, beans, oranges, and other citrus fruits, make up a balance diet providing protective nutrients for optimal eye health...

Smoking is not only bad for your lungs — it can hurt your eyes! Smoking increases your risk of diseases like macular degeneration and cataracts — and it can harm the optic nerve.

Protect your eyes from the sun by wearing sunglasses — even on cloudy days! Be sure to look for sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB radiation.

Wear protective eyewear. Safety glasses and goggles are designed to protect your eyes during certain activities, like playing sports, doing construction work, or doing home repairs.

Give your eyes a rest. Looking at a computer and other electronic devices for a long time can tire out your eyes. Rest your eyes by taking a break every 20 minutes to look at something about 20 feet away for about 20 seconds.

If you wear contacts, take steps to prevent eye infections. Always wash your hands before you put your contact lenses in or take them out. Be sure to disinfect your contact lenses and replace them regularly.

Every day you can take simple steps to keep your eyes healthy.

What is keeping you from getting your Annual Eye Exam During Healthy Vision awareness month. As Someone put it: Don't be blinded by bad habits. Protect your eyes! Schedule your appointment today and see all the difference a visual screening can make.

I hope you find these tips to be helpful. My goal is to help facilitates your wellness, to inspire healthy habits and to make a positive contribution to your well-being.

Until next time, I look forward to partnering with you on your health and wellness journey.