

Computer Vision Syndrome

The Following Information has been Prepared for You:

Computer Vision Syndrome, as the name implies, is linked to excessive use of electronics or computers. It causes eye fatigue, poor concentration, headache, poor night vision, light sensitivity, dry, watery or sore eyes, and blood shot eyes. It can cause the vision to fluctuate or the eyes to have difficulty going back and forth between near and distant viewing. Symptoms are most noticeable near the end of the day, when computer use has been heavy throughout the day. Patients that suffer from migraine headaches or have a history of head trauma or concussion have a higher risk of developing computer vision syndrome. Adults or children with accommodative dysfunction (poor flexibility and strength of the eye muscles that focus the lens), amblyopia (aka lazy eye), or strabismus (aka crossed eyes) are also likely to develop computer-related eyestrain at some point in their life.

There are several things you can do to minimize or prevent the development of computer vision syndrome:

First, make sure your ergonomics are correct. Ideally, the computer monitor should be below eye level, since looking down is easier on the converging eye muscles. It should be out at arm's length or further. Your neck and spine should be in alignment with the screen. If you wear bifocal, trifocal, or progressive eyeglasses, you should be positioned where you can clearly see the monitor without having to lift your chin, or hold your glasses up off your nose. Make sure you have good lighting and never work in the dark. If you are under fluorescent lights, you may consider switching to warm colored fluorescent bulbs, LED bulbs, or use incandescent-type bulbs.

Make sure the screen is set up for maximum comfort. In your computer settings, adjust the screen resolution to the highest possible. Increase the font, mouse, or cursor size. Decrease the brightness on the screen and choose a "night" or warm colored pallet. Daily clean the screen of dust, fingerprints, and smudges. Make sure there are no reflections or annoying glare from overhead lights on the screen. You may get significant relief just by getting a larger screen.

Next, get an eye exam and make sure you are wearing the correct prescription glasses or contact lenses. Choose antiglare and blue blocker lenses for maximum vision performance. Keep your glasses clean of fingerprints, smudges, debris and scratches. If you have contact lenses that get dry or blurry during computer use, talk to your doctor about changing the lenses to other brands or materials that will work better for you. Always follow doctor recommendations on contact lens care, wear, and replacement schedule. If you have signs of dry eye disease, or computer-related dry eye, your doctor can recommend various treatment options for you. Your doctor may also recommend special "computer glasses" with extra magnification, wide field of view, hi-index plastic for better optics, antiglare, and blue blocking treatments.

While working on a computer for long durations, it is important to take a short break about every 20 minutes to rest the eyes. Close them briefly, practice deep breathing techniques. Then open them and look at a far-away distance (across the room, down the hall, out the window, etc.) for at least 20 seconds. Consider using artificial tears to refresh the tear film, which gets dehydrated from decreased blink rate when you are on the computer. Drink plenty of decaffeinated fluids to keep your tear film healthy and fuel the tiny muscles in your eyes that are used to focus the eyes on the computer. Apply warm compresses to the lids, or walk away from the screen for a bit.

This 20-20-20 rule of thumb may be helpful: for every 20 minutes you are on a computer, spend 20 seconds looking at a distance of at least 20 feet away to relax your accommodation.

If the computer syndrome is persistent, or you are unable to modify your work environment for best computer ergonomics, your doctor can recommend a vision therapy program to strengthen the focusing muscles and make them more flexible, enabling the eyes to work for longer periods of time, with less symptoms of computer vision syndrome.

Please make time to schedule an eye and vision evaluation once a year, and discuss your school or work computer demands with them.

	☐ Very helpful - all questions are answered ☐ Somewhat helpful - I still have questions ☐ Not helpful – none of my questions were answered
Comments / Questions / Typos:	

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