

# VISTA

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• YOUR EYES • YOUR VISION • YOUR HEALTH

## MYLEENE MANAGING MYOPIA

MYLEENE KLASS  
SHARES HER  
EXPERIENCE  
OF LIVING WITH  
MYOPIA

## WEIGHT WATCH

MINIMISE  
YOUR RISK OF  
CHRONIC EYE  
CONDITIONS

## EYE QUIT

THE LINK BETWEEN  
CIGARETTE SMOKE  
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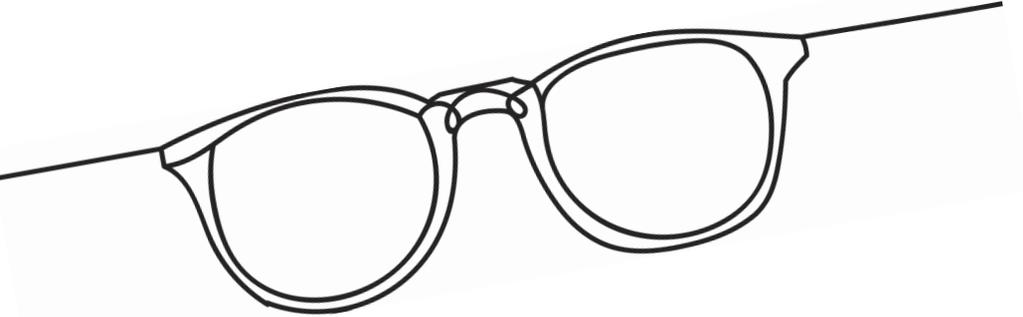
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# Welcome to

# Vista



Chantelle Kelly  
Editor

**E**very six minutes, someone is told they are going blind. Every single day 250 people start to lose their sight in the UK. Today there are two million Brits living with sight loss and this is predicted to increase to 2.7 million by 2030. It's shocking how many of us experience problems with our sight, yet

many of us are unaware of how we can take care of our eyes and help prevent chronic eye conditions.

This magazine, *Vista*, is published every single year as part of National Eye Health Week. Taking place on 20-26 September, this weeklong campaign promotes the importance of good eye health and the need for regular sight tests for all. We hope by the end of reading this issue, you will feel confident in how you can take care of your eyes to ensure long-term healthy vision.

As you flick through the pages you will find plenty of advice and information on a range of eye health topics, so you can learn how to support your sight: from nutritional and healthy eating guidance, to how to shape up and reduce your risk of the major causes of sight loss, what increasing screen time means for our eye health, plus a look at the link between cigarette smoke and sight loss.

Alongside top tips and guidance from a range of leading eye health experts, in this issue we also have the inspiring Myleene Klass as our cover star and celebrity story. The musician and presenter details her struggles with myopia, also known as short-sightedness, with the aim to help raise awareness for children's eye health.

In addition, we have a whole feature dedicated to how to find the perfect eyewear and lenses for you, as it's not always as simple as you think, we outline the different lens options available, and reveal what to expect at a regular sight test and why they are so important for us all.

We really hope you enjoy the read and that once you have finished the issue that you feel encouraged to book in for that sight test you have been putting off and take the steps needed to take better care of your sight for the future.

*Vista* would also like to say a huge thank you to the **Central Optical Fund**, which supports projects promoting, protecting, developing and supporting the health of our sight. For the fifth year running, this not-for-profit organisation has partnered with the magazine, and we really appreciate its ongoing support.

Once you've finished reading head to [visionmatters.org.uk](http://visionmatters.org.uk) for more eye health tips and advice.

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# LATEST HEADLINES

A round-up of the latest news from the world of eye health.



## NEW SMART GLASSES

Facebook and Ray-Ban have launched a range of smart glasses called Ray-Ban Stories, designed to take pictures without distracting people from a preview screen.

The glasses feature two 5 MP cameras and a three-microphone audio array which allow you to take still images and videos – so you can capture your experiences without the distraction of a screen of a phone. The glasses have a six-hour battery life on a single charge and can record videos up to 30 seconds.

The glasses are available now in three different models, five colours, and with a range of lenses – including prescription – retailing for £299.



## CHARITY HIGHLIGHTS INACCESSIBLE PACKAGING WITH POP-UP STORE

A new campaign by Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) is highlighting the issue of inaccessible packaging and the impact it has on people with sight loss.

As part of its Design for Everyone campaign, the charity has opened its WhatsIn Store, an experiential event aiming to give an insight into how it feels to be confronted with inaccessible packaging. The store is stocked with products with blank or intentionally vague packaging.

RNIB CEO Matt Stringer said: "Everyone has the right to know what they're buying yet packaging information is so often inaccessible for blind and partially sighted people."



## HAND SANITISER WARNING

Parents are being urged to monitor their children when using hand sanitiser as it can cause chemical burns to the eyes.

Alcohol-based hand sanitisers have become widely available in public places, but the dispensers are typically placed around small children's eye level where they can be accidentally sprayed in the eyes. Adults also need to take care that kids don't unwittingly rub their eyes after hand sanitiser has been applied to their hands.

Hand sanitiser can be seriously damaging to the ocular surface because it contains high concentrations of alcohol, which can cause eye pain and damage the delicate surface of the eye.

## COFFEE INCREASES GLAUCOMA RISK

Three cups of coffee a day increases the risk of glaucoma in patients with family history of high intraocular pressure (IOP), finds new research.

The study, published in *Ophthalmology*, analysed UK Biobank records of 120,000 people and examined the relationship between IOP, caffeine intake and self-reported glaucoma diagnosis.

Overall, high caffeine intake was not associated with a risk of developing elevated IOP or glaucoma. However, among people with a genetic disposition towards high IOP greater caffeine consumption was linked to a higher IOP and higher glaucoma prevalence.

Those in the highest genetic risk category had a 3.9 times greater chance of developing glaucoma if they consumed three cups of coffee a day.



## AI DETECTS EYE DISEASE

Breakthrough in artificial intelligence (AI) helps detect dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

Researchers at Moorfields Eye Hospital have developed the first-ever fully automated algorithm, which can detect dry AMD using common eye scans.

The development will not only allow faster diagnosis of dry AMD, but will also help researchers develop successful treatments for the condition.



## COLOUR CORRECTING CONTACTS

Contact lenses made with millions of gold nanoparticles could help colour blindness by blocking out specific types of light, research shows.

These 'gold dust' particles filter out certain wavelengths of light, so the brain can distinguish between different colours, particularly reds and greens, more easily. The lenses could combat the most common type of colour blindness: red-green colour vision deficiency.

In a lab study, the lenses blocked at least 50 per cent of the light that mixes reds and greens, reported the journal *ACS Nano*, making it easier to tell the colours apart.

## NEW WAYS TO REDUCE NHS WAITING LISTS

The government has announced plans to help reduce NHS waiting lists.

Local surgical hubs, new technology to speed up diagnosis, and innovative ways of working will help the NHS to tackle growing waiting lists and treat around 30 per cent more patients who need elective care by 2023 to 2024.

Backed by a new £36 billion investment in health and social care over the next three years, the funding will see the NHS deliver an extra nine million checks, scans and operations for patients across the country.



## POLLUTION LINKED TO SIGHT LOSS

A new study has revealed a link between air pollution and irreversible vision loss.

Published in *British Journal of Ophthalmology*, the research found a link between fine particle air pollution and macular degeneration; those that were exposed to higher levels of fine particle air pollution had higher rates of self-reported age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

Exposure to other pollutants, including nitrogen dioxide but not coarse particulate matter, was also associated with changes in retina thickness, detected on imaging.



“I’ve worn  
glasses since I  
was four”

Myleene Klass shares her personal experience of living with myopia, short-sightedness, to help raise awareness for children’s eye health.

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**M**yleene Klass has detailed her struggles with myopia, also known as short-sightedness, with the aim to help raise awareness for children’s eye health.

The musician and presenter has had myopia since the age of four and has revealed that since then her eyesight has continued to deteriorate.

Reflecting on her personal experience of growing up with the eye condition, Mylene said: “I’ve had myopia since I was four years old and as I’ve got older, my eyesight has got progressively worse. As a child, I would sit so closely to my sheet music or virtually on top of my workbooks at school. I found it all embarrassing.”

The mother of three has shared her story to help raise awareness for children’s eye health. “Myopia is known to run in families and may also lead to an increased risk of future eye health problems, so I’m always asking my kids about their vision. The good news for parents and kids today is that there are special contact lenses such as MiSight® 1 day that can help slow the progression of myopia.”

The 43-year-old star is urging parents to take their children for regular sight tests at their local optical practice: “So, my advice to parents is to



add 'get kids eyes checked' to your ever-growing list for the school holidays – it's really important and will help protect their vision for the future. That's why I'm supporting CooperVision's Brilliant Futures™ campaign to prioritise our children's eye health!"

Myleene has used her social media to highlight the importance of looking after your child's eyesight, posting pictures of herself as a child, wearing her glasses whilst at school, plus a photograph of her with her three children – Ava, Hero and Apollo. She captioned the Instagram post: "I have myopia AKA short-sightedness".

She then encouraged parents to get their children's eyes tested. Myleene commented: "I take my kids' eye health really seriously as myopia can be hereditary and one in six kids in the UK are affected by it by the age of 15. Myopia is actually on the rise and lockdown has resulted in more time spent indoors and extra screen usage".

A sight test will ensure any problems, such as childhood conditions like squint, amblyopia (lazy eye), hyperopia (long-sightedness) or myopia (short-sightedness), are picked up early. All four- and five-year-olds are advised to have a free NHS sight test as the sooner problems are identified, potentially the better the treatment outcome.

Myleene has also shared how her eye health affected her during her childhood years. "Whilst I was lucky enough to have been diagnosed early with myopia (short-sightedness) and to have gotten glasses, I've always struggled with my eyesight. I squinted through class, sports meant I couldn't wear glasses so couldn't see a thing, I would swim with my arm out searching for the wall as I couldn't judge the distance, I suffered from headaches and in Ava's words, it really knocked my confidence. My school report once said, 'If Myleene's name wasn't on the register, we wouldn't know



she was in the class!"

Myleene described what it was like wearing spectacles as a child. "When I see pictures of myself as a girl smiling in her glasses, I'm immediately transported to how vulnerable I felt. Wearing glasses was not cool when I was a kid. The conflicting thing is I also hid behind them, literally wore them like a mask. It's quite emotional looking at those photos, as here I am raising a family and encouraging positivity in all areas."

She finishes by stating, "Your eyes affect your entire life. That's why I believe so passionately in spreading the word about myopia and children's eye health. To think, there are now contact lenses especially for children that not only help you see but have been found to slow down the progression of myopia by 59 per cent on



average, it blows my mind. No child needs to needlessly struggle now."

Myleene also took to her Instagram stories to drive home the campaign and to further encourage parents to book an eye test for their children. "Many health checks stopped during the pandemic, and myopia is on the rise as we've spent so much more time at home and in front of screens – so don't put it off, book an appointment with your optician."



Myopia affects up to one in three people. Find out how to cope with this common eye condition.

**M**yopia, or short-sightedness, is thought to affect up to one in three people in the UK and is becoming increasingly more common. In fact, levels of myopia in the UK have doubled since the 1960s. This common eye condition causes distant objects to

appear blurred, while close objects can be seen clearly. The severity of the condition can vary from person to person; with some suffering from only mild short-sightedness, where treatment may not be required, to severe, where a person's vision is significantly affected.

### Reduce your risk

You can lower your chances of myopia; genetic, ethnic, and environmental risk factors all play a part in the onset of short-sightedness.

Having short-sighted parents can increase your risk of developing myopia, but the current epidemic is “acquired rather than genetic”, according to an overview published in journal *Progress in Retinal and Eye Research*.

There are other factors that can increase your risk of developing the eye condition; for example, studies have found that ‘near work’, activities done at short working distance such as working on computer screens and looking at smartphones, has been linked to an increased risk of myopia.

However, this risk can be offset by spending time outside; experts have calculated that two hours a day outside can mitigate the myopia risk associated with near work activities.

Dr Paramdeep Bilkhu MCOptom, Clinical Adviser at the College of Optometrists, says: “Researchers know that some things may make it more likely that a child will eventually become myopic; having one or both parents with myopia, being of east-Asian ethnic origin, and spending little time outdoors. As such, it’s important for children to spend some time outside, for two hours a day if possible. Becoming myopic before nine years old may increase the risk of developing a high level of myopia”.

### Myopia in children

In children, myopia often begins between the ages of six and 14. Key warning signs include needing to sit near the front of class, sitting close to the TV, complaining of headaches or tired eyes, and regularly rubbing their eyes.

There is now consistent evidence that children who spend more time outdoors are less likely to be or become myopic; however, parental anxiety, demanding homework schedules and the rise of electronic entertainment are increasingly keeping children indoors. A study by Cardiff University and the University of Bristol concluded that every year of education incrementally increases a person’s risk of myopia; the increasingly sedentary social lives of children and young people may be to blame.

Research indicates that early intervention can help slow down the risk of developing myopia; so, sight tests in children at most risk of developing myopia are extremely important.

### Treating short-sightedness

There is no cure for myopia but there are treatments available which can help. Corrective lenses, such as glasses or contact lenses, can help the eyes focus on distant objects. Artificial lens implants and laser eye surgery are other options.

Certain treatments can even help slow down the rate of progression. Keith Tempany, Past President of the British Contact Lens Association, explains: “Studies have shown that certain contact lenses can actually slow the progression of myopia in children.

“Examples include orthokeratology lenses (Ortho-K), a rigid lens worn overnight but removed in the morning, giving the patient clear vision all day without needing to wear glasses or contact lenses, and soft lenses with dual focus designs, available as either daily disposables or reusables, which have been shown to slow down myopic progression.”

Low dose atropine eye drops have also been found to be effective in reducing myopia progression.

# FASHION FRAMES

Discover the key eyewear trends for this autumn/winter and what you should be looking for when choosing the right frames.

## 1. Seeing clearly

A hot eyewear style from last year, clear and translucent frames are back once again in the limelight. This season you will find fully clear, translucent frames, along with subtle pastel shades of blue, green, pink, peach and grey. It seems transparent glasses are a firm favourite and are here to stay.

## 2. Gold and glamorous

An understated but popular choice, thin rim glasses in shades of gold and rose gold offer a touch of chic and elegance. A sleek pair of gold metal frames are a must-have for minimalists and those looking for a pair of spectacles for all occasions. The gold hues go with any outfit choice but are a perfect pairing for the Christmas season.

## 3. A pop of colour

Large, over-sized statement frames have proved popular in recent years, but this season really take centre stage. You will find them in the classic shade of black and popular tortoiseshell, as well as bold hues of canary yellow, cobalt blue, emerald green and pink – in every shade, from delicate baby pink through to bright fuchsia.

## 4. Geometric shapes

This autumn and winter you will find plenty of geometric options, with glasses available in interesting shapes such as hexagon, octagon, square and rectangle. This style of glasses is not only extremely stylish, but also help to accentuate your facial features – particularly if you have a round face.



## FIND YOUR FRAMES

When it comes to choosing the right frames to suit your face it's not always an easy task. Jo Holmes, President of ABDO (Association of British Dispensing Opticians), says the shape and colour are the key considerations to make when buying a new pair of glasses.

"When you go round the trade fairs and look at the magazines, it's all about the thicker, heavier, plastic-looking frames right now – but that style of frame doesn't actually suit a lot of faces," explains Jo. "Although the bigger styles are in fashion, there are suppliers that have larger looking frames but for smaller faces and these are great."

Jo recommends avoiding the darker shades. "Often people come in and say, 'I really fancy this dark black frame', I let them put it on and then they will look and go, 'Oh no, that really doesn't suit me'. That's because as we get older our complexions get paler, so you can have darker colours but you don't want to go for the blacks or the browns – go for your burgandys, purples or the navys."

You should also examine the shape of the frames, Jo advises: "I am quite mindful of the shapes that we put on people's faces, because if you get the wrong shape that doesn't fit the person then those glasses will always be slipping down or they will be looking through the wrong part of the lens."

She explains that the right shade of colour is key. "It's fair to say that the wrong colour can have a really negative impact as well, or a negative effect on people's skin tones. Yellow is a good example, although a popular colour that is often requested, it can be an awful colour on a lot of people, on a lot of skin tones."

Ultimately, it's best to find the pair that fit you best. "When someone comes to me and asks what I think, I always look at their prescription first of all, I always discuss with them their lenses and which are best ones for them, and then I start looking at the frames because, for me, seeing correctly through the lenses is more important than the frame – if you have a well fitted frame that person will enjoy the vision, if you've got a frame that's too big on them and they keep on slipping down and they're uncomfortable or they're digging in, they will never enjoy wearing those glasses. Comfort is just so important; I think poorly fitting glasses never look good."

### 5. Fabulous cat-eye

A retro classic, the fabulous cat-eye glasses are a flattering style for most face shapes and add a touch of femininity. Although sleek and stylish, cat-eye spectacles still manage to make a bold statement. Available in black, classic tortoise or bright colours, you're sure to find the right shade for you.

# Life through a LENS

Which lenses are best for you? *Vista* explores the different lens options available.

**M**ore than one in six Brits wear glasses, either some or all of the time, but when it comes to lens materials, coatings and tints, most are left confused. Research by *Which?* magazine shows that when buying our specs we don't always understand whether different choices – such as lens coatings – are necessarily right for us.

With so many options available, it can be difficult to know which ones are the best fit for you and your eyewear. Here we take a look at some of the different coatings and lens materials available.

## Lens materials explained

- **Resin lens:** Lightweight and strong, resin materials offer high impact resistance and with a variety of sports tint options. A popular choice for adults looking for extra-robust glasses and for children's eyewear. They do scratch easily so it's best to ask for an anti-scratch coating to be included.
- **Photochromic lenses:** These lenses are activated by UV light, becoming sunglasses when outdoors. A great option for those looking for a pair of sunglasses and glasses in one. Make sure you ask how quickly the lenses change and how dark they will go.
- **High-index lenses:** Eyewear lenses that are designed to be thinner and lighter than regular lenses. The higher the index, the thinner the lens. They are especially recommended if you have a strong eyeglass prescription for short-sightedness, long-sightedness or astigmatism.
- **Aspheric design lenses:** These are smoother and flatter in surface profile, minimising the distortion that occurs when you wear glasses – including reducing blur and improving depth perception. A good option for long-sighted and age-related reading prescriptions.
- **Customised lens:** An ideal choice for those with unusual prescription, high astigmatism, large or small pupil distances, or uneven eyes. To make bespoke lenses, extra measurements are carried out and the lens is optimised for your eyesight.

## COATINGS AND TINTS

- **Anti-fog:** If you have been experiencing problems with fogging when wearing a face mask, then anti-fog coatings and lenses can help.
- **Anti-scratch:** This hard resin coating increases lens durability and helps prevent scratches from occurring – remember, no lens is completely scratchproof, so you still need to care for your spectacles.
- **Anti-reflection:** This coating significantly improves vision by eliminating excessive brightness from direct or reflected light – particularly useful to those who experience glare whilst night driving.
- **Blue light blocker:** These lenses are designed to reduce the amount of blue light that reaches your eye. However, there is a lack of scientific evidence that blue light blocking lenses improve visual performance, alleviate symptoms of eye strain or improve sleep quality.

## Decisions, decisions

When it comes to choosing the best lens options for you, it is a good idea to consider which benefits you are looking for. For example, would you like your lenses to have UV protection, be scratch resistant, or prevent glare and reflection? Or are you looking for sharper vision, reduced fogging and/or smudge prevention? Perhaps you want to extend the life of your specs, are looking for pure comfort or it is purely cosmetic? Don't worry, there are options available for all.

Other factors affecting your choice include your lifestyle (for example, do you drive, use a computer for work, play sports, or spend time outdoors), your age and profession, plus your budget. Some materials and coatings come as standard, whilst others may incur additional costs.

The dispensing optician at your local optical practice will be happy to guide you through options that may be right for you.



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# Eye care for SCREEN USERS

With many of us spending more and more time glued to our devices, Eye Health UK explores what increasing screen time means for our eye health.

**A**ccording to one recent study, UK adults are spending an average of 6.4 hours a day on the internet and a further 1.8 hours a day on social media.

With such high levels of screen time, it's important we're all aware of the impact this can have on our eye health and understand some simple steps we can take to minimise the effect.

## Screen fatigue

Looking at screens won't permanently damage your eyes; however, it may contribute to eye strain, headaches, and trigger episodes of visual stress.

These reactions to prolonged screen use are commonly known as 'screen fatigue' and while symptoms tend to subside after resting your eyes, screen fatigue can be uncomfortable and frustrating.

Extended screen time can also make symptoms of existing eye conditions such as uncorrected myopia (short-sightedness) more pronounced.

## Eye complaints

Symptoms associated with staring at a screen for long stretches without taking breaks can include:

- Tired eyes. Ocular muscles, like any others, can get tired from continued focus on close work.
- Viewing a screen for extended periods can lead to headaches and concentration difficulties.
- Blurred vision. Gazing at a fixed distance for an extended period can cause your focus to spasm or 'lock up'. This can cause your vision to blur temporarily when you look away from the screen.
- Dry eyes. Studies consistently show that people's blink rate drops significantly when concentrating on a digital screen. A reduced blink rate can speed up evaporation of the eyes' tear film resulting in dry, itchy, red or even watery eyes.

## Minimise the effects

There is much you can do to ease the effects of screen fatigue:

- Take frequent breaks. Follow the 20-20-20 rule: look away from the screen every 20 minutes and focus on an object 20 feet away, for at least 20 seconds.

As well as being good for your eye health, frequent breaks can help your productivity and mental health – giving you time to pause, reflect and breathe.

- Remember to blink. Staring at a screen can reduce your blink rate by as much as 60 per cent. Plants placed around your home or office can help improve humidity and minimise dry eye symptoms.

A warm compress applied to the eyes may provide relief from symptoms of dry eye. Your optometrist or pharmacist may also recommend a spray or drops to help manage symptoms of dry and irritated eyes.





## TRY THIS AT HOME

Tea bags make a great warm compress.

> Make a cuppa as you normally would but hold the milk and sugar.

> Once your tea has brewed squeeze the tea bag out, allow it to cool for a couple of minutes, then sit back, close your eyes and place the bags over your eyelids.

> Relax with the tea bag(s) in place for five to 10 minutes.

> Make sure you use a separate bag for each eye.

■ **Screen positioning.** Make sure the top of the screen on your desktop or laptop computer is at eye level. Having to look up at a screen opens eyes wider and dries them out quicker.

One rule of thumb when thinking about where and how to position screens is the 1 – 2 – 10 rule – mobile phones ideally at one foot (30cm), desktop devices and laptops at two feet (60 – 75cms), and roughly 10 feet for TV screens (depending on how big the screen is).

■ **Adjusting the font size** so you can comfortably read it (12pt min) may also help reduce screen fatigue.

■ **Lighting matters.** To cut down on glare and eye fatigue, a study published in the *Journal of Ophthalmology & Research* says the level of lighting in a room when using a computer or other screen should be roughly half what it would be for other activities such as craft-work or writing on paper.

Try to position computers so that light from uncovered windows, lamps and overhead light fixtures doesn't shine directly on the screens. And, keep your screen clean – finger marks cause reflections!

■ **DON'T FORGET:** If you need glasses specifically for VDU / screen work make sure you wear them.

If you regularly use a screen for work your employer will pay the cost of regular eye tests and cover costs of eyewear if it is prescribed specifically for screen use. Ask your HR or Occupational Health Team for information about your company's eye care policy and benefits.

# Real Life Story



Aimie Strachan reveals her daughter's experience of wearing an eye patch, and how it inspired her to write *Matilda's Eye Patch*, a book to support children with eye patches.

**W**hen her daughter was diagnosed with amblyopia (often called a lazy eye), it inspired Aimie Strachan to write a children's book, *Matilda's Eye Patch*, to help support, explain and encourage young children to be proud and confident when wearing their patch.

Here, Aimie reveals to *Vista* how her daughter Matilda was first diagnosed with the condition and how it led her to help other children with eyepatches understand their condition.

## How was Matilda first diagnosed with amblyopia?

I had noticed Matilda's eye turning in when she was tired. I wasn't sure if I was overreacting but went to the GP when she was 18 months old. I had no knowledge of eye conditions, I don't even wear glasses, and really didn't know if I was doing the right thing. The GP thankfully referred us to the local hospital. Matilda was prescribed glasses aged two and then six months later received her eye patch. It was a shock when she was prescribed a patch, I didn't know any other children who patched.



effective for her. There was a big difference in prescription between her eyes initially and now that gap is nearly closed. As she is young, we are hopeful more improvement can be achieved by continuing with patching.

## What inspired you to write *Matilda's Eye Patch*?

When she first got her patch, I started searching for appropriate resources to support her. I wanted a book to explain to Matilda what was going to happen now she had a patch, but I couldn't find one, so *Matilda's Eye Patch* was born. Initially, it was only going to be for us to use but once I started to connect with other patching families online, I realised there was a definite need.

*Matilda's Eye Patch* is not just a story with a patching character: it is a guide to patching in the same way you would get a book to help with potty training or becoming a sibling. It is aimed at preschool children; patching is most effective the younger it is started.

## What do you hope readers take away from the book?

*Matilda's Eye Patch* ends with the line, 'I am still me'. I want children who patch to feel confident. I want parents to be reassured and to know they are not alone. It is daunting getting that initial diagnosis but patching can be a really positive experience.

*Matilda's Eye Patch*, RRP £5.99, is available from Amazon and Etsy.



## Has wearing an eye patch been a positive experience for her?

From my initial feeling of sadness at her getting a patch, I now feel grateful. Grateful that it was diagnosed at a young age, and she got the help she needed. I am also so proud of Matilda and how she has handled wearing glasses and a patch. She has been so responsible and resilient, especially considering how young she is. I love that she patches and wears glasses now, it is such a big part of her personality.

## Has it been an effective treatment?

Matilda has patched for a year, and it has proved very

## COMMON CONDITIONS

The most common children's eye conditions include amblyopia (lazy eye), astigmatism, hyperopia (long-sightedness), myopia (short-sightedness) and squint.

Optometrists can test a child's sight at any age, so if you have any concerns about your child's eye health do make an appointment, otherwise it is key for all pre-schools to have their sight tested before starting reception at your high street optician.

Early diagnosis of children's eye conditions increases the chances of effective treatment and reduces the risk of permanent damage.

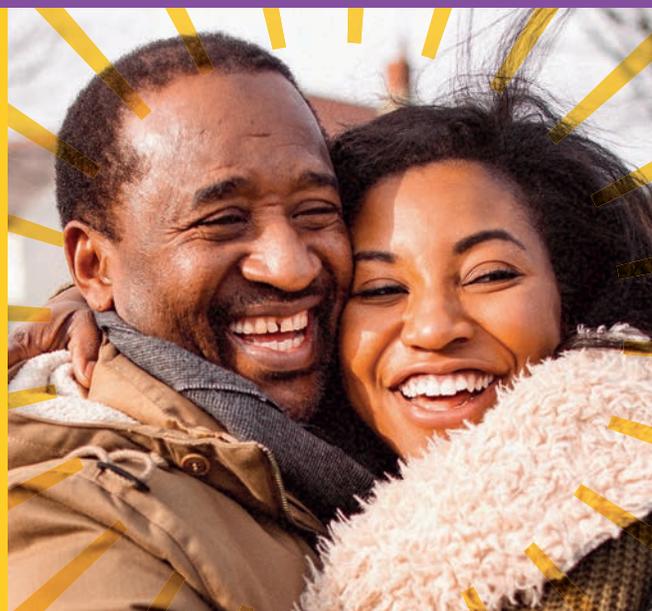
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UK

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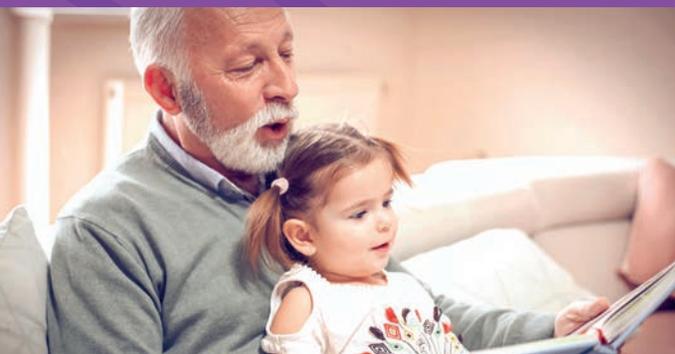
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Text **GLAUCOMA** to 70490 to donate £5 and together we can end preventable glaucoma sight loss

Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message.



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# EYE QUIT

*Vista* explores the link between cigarette smoke and vision loss.

**W**e all know that smoking is bad for our health, but many are unaware that it can be damaging to our eyesight too. A recent survey by the Macular Society found that more than half (53 per cent) of UK adults were unaware that smoking can cause blindness.

The toxic chemicals in tobacco smoke can damage the delicate surface and internal structure of the eye, which can increase your risk of eye conditions such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD) – the UK’s leading cause of sight loss – as well as nuclear cataracts, thyroid eye disease, dry eye and poor colour vision. The link between smoking and sight loss is as strong as the link between smoking and lung cancer.

Optometrist David Cartwright, Chair of Eye Health UK, comments: “Any amount of smoking, even light, occasional or second-hand, can affect your eye health and increase your chances of suffering sight-threatening eye diseases.

“Half of all sight loss in the UK is avoidable and smoking is the single biggest modifiable risk factor. Saying ‘eye quit’ and joining one of the free NHS cessation programmes will improve your eye health and significantly reduce your risk of losing your sight. After a decade or so being smoke free your risk of sight loss reduces to that of a non-smoker.”

Statistics reveal that smokers are up to four times more likely to have AMD than non-smokers and are more likely to suffer the condition earlier than non-smokers. Smokers are also likely to experience a more rapid progression of AMD and poorer treatment outcomes.

In addition, smoking increases your risk of developing

cataracts as tobacco toxins cause oxidative damage to the lens proteins; the risk of nuclear cataracts (those that form in the centre of the lens) is three times greater in smokers. Smoking increases your risk of thyroid eye disease by up to eight times and can increase the severity of symptoms. Smoking cigarettes has also been found to increase the risk of dry eye syndrome and can exacerbate existing eye conditions.

Smoking is linked to other eye conditions, including diabetic retinopathy and uveitis – an inflammation of the eye’s middle layer, or uvea, that can result in complete vision loss. There is also growing evidence that cigarettes impair colour vision; smokers who consume more than 20 cigarettes per day may suffer colour vision defects.

Worryingly, the pandemic has had a significant impact on the number of smokers here in the UK; a study funded by Cancer Research UK found that hundreds of thousands more people smoked compared to before the pandemic hit. There was a 25 per cent rise in 18- to 34-year-olds who smoke – resulting in more than 652,000 new smokers.

It’s not all bad news though, as the research also found increases in the number of smokers quitting successfully.

Michelle Mitchell, Cancer Research UK’s Chief Executive, said: “There’s no ‘safe’ level of smoking or drinking, and stopping smoking or cutting down drinking will help to reduce your risk of cancer.”

It’s never too late to stop smoking, quitting at any age can reduce your risk of developing many sight-threatening eye conditions. It’s time to take care of not only your eyes but your overall health too; it’s time to stub it out for good and say eye quit.

## HELP TO QUIT...

### In England:

- Smokefree ([nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking](https://nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking))
- Call the Smokefree National Helpline on 0300 123 1044

### In Scotland:

Quit Your Way is a free NHS stop smoking service. To find out more information on stop smoking services, call the Quit Your Way helpline service on 0800 84 84 84 or visit [QuitYourWay.scot](https://QuitYourWay.scot).

### In Wales:

- Help me quit
- Call the free Stop Smoking Wales Helpline on 0800 085 2219

### In Northern Ireland:

- Want to stop
  - See local support services for telephone support
- Or visit your local pharmacy for more advice on quitting and local smoking cessation services.

# Best in BEAUTY

Our pick of the best cosmetics for sensitive eyes and contact lens wearers.

## REHYDRATE AND REPAIR UNDER EYE

The Studio Botanic Eye Cream regenerates and smooths the sensitive skin around your eyes and provides intensive moisture – so small wrinkles can be reduced, and the skin looks alert and tight. In addition, the whitening effect of the cream makes eye shadows disappear and ensures a radiant complexion.

The special formulation consists of high-quality pomegranate seed oil, cucumber extract and rosehip seed oil, which provides your eye area with many valuable ingredients. The vegan waxes also protect your skin from drying out and against harmful environmental influences, therefore preventing premature ageing of the skin.

The Studio Botanic Eye Cream is cruelty free, suitable for vegans, certified by NATRUE and contains no fragrance.

■ £30 available at [www.level7beautyhall.com](http://www.level7beautyhall.com)



## ENHANCE YOUR LASHES

Revitalash Advanced Eyelash Serum is the original, one-of-a-kind, ophthalmologist developed eyelash conditioner that enhances the look of lashes and protects against breakage, while improving health, flexibility, and strength, for lashes that thrive, naturally.

It contains a proprietary blend featuring a scientifically advanced technology. Peptides, lipids, biotin, and green tea extract, rich in panthenol, condition and

strengthen lashes while defending from environmental damage, as well as damage caused by lash styling products that can cause breakage and brittleness.

The Eyelash Serum is ophthalmologist formulated, dermatologist reviewed and clinically tested. It is hypoallergenic and non-irritating, vegan friendly, cruelty-free and does not contain parabens, phthalates, BHT or gluten.

■ £110 from [www.revitalash.co.uk](http://www.revitalash.co.uk)

## REMOVE MAKE-UP WITH EASE

The Clarins Instant Eye Make-Up Remover works to instantly lift away every last trace of make-up, including long wearing and waterproof formulas. The eye make-up remover lotion is enriched with rose and cornflower waters which work to moisturise and soothe the skin, and ultra-fine oils which have a softening effect and enhance the cleanser ability.

This ultra-effective instant make-up remover lotion leaves skin clean and perfectly radiant day after day. It does not sting even the most sensitive of eyes and is suitable for contact lens wearers. Dermatologist and ophthalmologist tested. Suitable for all skin types.

■ 125ml for £21, available at [www.clarins.co.uk](http://www.clarins.co.uk)



## DEFINE YOUR PEEPERS

Lush Lashes is a new cruelty-free and volumizing jet black mascara that harnesses the benefits of low preservative and natural lash conditioning ingredients to deliver long-lasting volume, separation, and luscious lengths!

Conditioning coconut oil and protective acacia gum work together to protect and coat the lash hair, holding a curl and keeping pigment in place all day (reducing the risk of unwanted smudging!). Last but not least, wonder ingredient wheatgrass infusion contains a whole host of vitamins, minerals and proteins, which encourages lash growth throughout wear.

■ £15.50 available at [www.lush.com](http://www.lush.com)

# Watch your weight

Did you know that by maintaining a healthy weight you can minimise your risk of chronic eye conditions? It's time to shape up and watch that weight.

It is simple, maintaining a healthy weight is vital for good eye health; a healthy weight can minimise your risk of suffering chronic eye conditions caused by elevated body mass index (BMI).

In fact, obesity is a risk factor for all four major causes of sight loss: macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and cataracts. Not only can being overweight or obese increase your risk of developing some of the major causes of sight loss, carrying excess weight can increase inner eye pressure and damage blood vessels, which disrupts the flow of oxygen and essential nutrients to the eye.

According to new Public Health England (PHE) research, more than four in 10 adults (41 per cent) say they have put weight on since the first national lockdown in March 2020. Worryingly, the average weight gain was over half a stone, with one in five gaining more than a stone. Experts believe that

comfort eating and extra snacking have contributed to people's weight gain during the pandemic.

Statistics confirm that we are a nation of heavyweights; according to the 2019 Health Survey for England, around six in 10 adults in England are above a healthy weight, with 36 per cent being classed as overweight and 28 per cent as obese.

Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at Public Health England, said: "The past 16 months have caused many to change their habits, so it is not a surprise to see so many people reporting weight gain.

"We know how hard it can be to lose weight and keep it off – so, we are providing a range of support options to help motivate people and help them maintain a healthy weight. It's never too late to make changes to help improve your health. Visit the Better Health website for ideas and support that is right for you, and you can seek support from your local weight management service."



## DID YOU KNOW?

Small changes, such as swapping sugary drinks with water or ditching sugar from your tea, can make a big difference to your weight in the long term.

## What is a BMI?

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to both men and women.

To calculate your BMI, simply divide your weight in kilogrammes by your height in metres squared. For example, if you are 5ft 7in (1.7 m) and weigh 10 stone (63.64 kg): 63.64 divided 1.72 (1.7 x 1.7) your BMI = 22 (ideal weight range).

### BMI Results

**18.5 and under = underweight**

**18.5 – 25 = ideal weight (healthy weight range)**

**25 – 30 = overweight**

**30+ = obese**

Another measure of obesity is ABSI (A Body Shape Index). To calculate your ABSI visit [www.fatcalc.com/absi](http://www.fatcalc.com/absi)

## Start your journey

To help you kickstart your weight loss journey, the NHS has created these six simple steps that will start your journey towards a healthier weight:

1. Download the NHS weight loss plan.
2. Check if you are a healthy weight with the BMI healthy weight calculator. If you need to lose a few pounds, you will be given a daily personal calorie target.
3. Take the next snack you plan to have and swap it for something healthier. Aim to do the same every day: you've adopted your first weight loss habit.
4. Drinks, including alcohol, contain calories too, so try to cut down on sugary drinks and get advice about cutting down on alcohol.
5. Find a way to fit just one extra walk into your day. Check out our walking tips.
6. Try to have breakfast every morning. Get ideas in healthy breakfasts (for people who hate breakfast).



## Shape up

If you're looking for help on how you can lose excess weight, Public Health England has launched the latest Better Health campaign to encourage and support people to lose weight, eat more healthily and get active.

The new campaign offers free evidence-based support and guidance to those working towards a healthier weight, including the NHS Weight Loss Plan – a free app that can be found on the Better Health website featuring a 12-week diet and exercise plan. It is designed to help adults lose weight safely – and keep it off.

The app includes several features such as a BMI calculator, food diary, NHS information and tips for physical activity and weight management, and links to other programmes that can support healthy behaviours, such as Couch to 5K.

Average weight loss of those who complete the 12-week NHS Weight Loss Plan is 5.8kg (almost a stone).

**The NHS Weight Loss Plan app is free for adults to download from the App store and Google Play.**





### DO NOT SKIP BREAKFAST

Skipping breakfast will not help you lose weight. You could miss out on essential nutrients, and you may end up snacking more throughout the day because you feel hungry. **Check out these healthy breakfast recipes.**

## 2

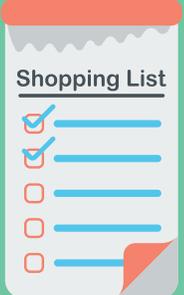
### EAT REGULAR MEALS

Eating at regular times during the day helps burn calories at a faster rate. It also reduces the temptation to snack on foods high in fat and sugar. Find out more about eating healthily.

## 12

### PLAN YOUR MEALS

Try to plan your breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks for the week, making sure you stick to your calorie allowance. You may find it helpful to make a weekly shopping list.




### CUT DOWN ON ALCOHOL

A standard glass of wine can contain as many calories as a piece of chocolate. Over time, drinking too much can easily contribute to weight gain. Find out more about the calories in alcohol.



### DO NOT STOCK JUNK FOOD

To avoid temptation, do not stock junk food – such as chocolate, biscuits, crisps and sweet fizzy drinks – at home. Instead, opt for healthy snacks, such as fruit, unsalted rice cakes, oat cakes, unsalted or unsweetened popcorn, and fruit juice.



## 9

### DO NOT BAN FOODS

Do not ban any foods from your weight loss plan, especially the ones you like. Banning foods will only make you crave them more. There is no reason you cannot enjoy the occasional treat as long as you stay within your daily calorie allowance.



# 1

## WEIGHT TIPS

Get off to the best start on the NHS Weight Loss Plan with these 12 diet and lifestyle tips.

# 3

## EAT PLENTY OF FRUIT AND VEG

Fruit and veg are low in calories and fat, and high in fibre – three essential ingredients for successful weight loss. They also contain plenty of vitamins and minerals. Read up on getting your five a day.



# 4

## GET MORE ACTIVE

Being active is key to losing weight and keeping it off. As well as providing lots of health benefits, exercise can help burn off the excess calories you cannot lose through diet alone. Find an activity you enjoy and are able to fit into your routine.



# 5

## DRINK PLENTY OF WATER

People sometimes confuse thirst with hunger. You can end up consuming extra calories when a glass of water is really what you need. Read more about drinking water as part of a healthy diet.



# 6

## EAT HIGH FIBRE FOODS

Foods containing lots of fibre can help keep you feeling full, which is perfect for losing weight. Fibre is only found in food from plants, such as fruit and veg, oats, wholegrain bread, brown rice and pasta, and beans, peas and lentils.



# 7

## READ FOOD LABELS

Knowing how to read food labels can help you choose healthier options. Use the calorie information to work out how a particular food fits into your daily calorie allowance on the weight loss plan. Find out more about reading food labels.

## USE A SMALLER PLATE

Using smaller plates can help you eat smaller portions. By using smaller plates and bowls, you may be able to gradually get used to eating smaller portions without going hungry. It takes about 20 minutes for the stomach to tell the brain it is full, so eat slowly and stop eating before you feel full.



# 2

## FAST LOSS TIPS

As soon as possible start your Weight Loss Plan with these 7 fast loss tips.

# Finding the perfect pair

How to find the right eyewear and lenses for you...

It can be difficult finding the perfect pair of glasses for your needs. You may be looking for eyewear suitable for your sports and hobbies, or perhaps you're finding it difficult driving at night thanks to the glare of oncoming traffic.

To help you find the right specs, we've asked Daryl Newsome, Vice President of ABDO (Association of Dispensing Opticians), to answer your questions.

**My eyes have begun to feel uncomfortable from the glare of oncoming headlights when I drive at night. What do you recommend?**

Headlight technology has introduced brighter and "blue er" headlights; blue light is difficult for the human eye to focus and out of focus light produces a disabling glare. To control the amount of blue light there are special filters and coatings available.

A "blueshield" coating absorbs and reflects more blue light than other colours, thus reducing the amount of blue light getting to your eye and improving your vision in these conditions. A lens filter could also help, although one must be careful as there are strict guidelines that limit how dark a lens filter can be to be used for night driving.

**Now that I work from home I have been suffering from glare and reflections when working at my computer. Is there anything I can do to stop this?**

There are many considerations you could implement to improve this, firstly the position of your screen relative to windows and lighting: can you move your work environment around to stop light reflecting from behind you? Is there any way of shadowing or blocking light that is not helping?

If the glare is coming from your spectacle lens maybe getting coated lenses could be the best solution. There are many different types available including honeycomb coating or a vista mesh coating.

**It's a real pain having to switch from my regular specs to my sunglasses when the sun comes out. Do UV filters work well?**

UV filters are extremely good at blocking UV light but they don't always absorb any visible light as sunspecs do. There are two obvious solutions here, one would be a

photochromic lens which will go darker when the sun shines on them. However, not all photochromics work in cars as the windscreen filters out the UV light so you need good advice on which product to choose.

Another good solution to this that I use myself is a magnetic clip-on, they are not like the old ones your parents had, modern frame manufacturers have come up with a fantastic selection of fashion frames that come with their own purpose made clip-on that attaches and removes using magnets carefully hidden in the frames – it allows you to add or remove a tint from your lens easily and safely and quickly – much easier than changing from sun spectacles to clear spectacles. A suggested make would be ECO, these are both functional and environmentally responsible.

**I've just taken up netball and usually wear contacts when playing sport but I'd like to buy a pair of glasses as a back-up. What should I consider when buying sports eyewear?**

Safety! Sports frames differ from regular





specs in design and material, they are designed to protect your eyes and withstand much more impact. Also the lens material has to be carefully considered; discussion should be centred around impact resistance and optical performance, most people choose polycarbonate for this purpose but trivex could also be considered.

**My five-year-old son has just been prescribed glasses. What do you recommend to help them survive the rough and tumble of playtimes?**

If your son is myopic (short-sighted), have you discussed with your eyecare professional myopia control and myopia management? For the rough and tumble there are frames available that are stronger than others. Some come with detachable sides so you can fit a sports band, these are usually more expensive than the standard frames but could save you untold trips to the opticians to have spectacles repaired or replaced.

Children's spectacles must be dispensed by a qualified dispensing optician. If there are particular frames that you would like to try most practices will happily order them in for you to try. My practice uses a range called Nano Custom Fit – a strong fashionable and versatile range of children's spectacles.

**I want to treat myself to a pair of designer glasses. Is there anything I can do to help keep them looking like new?**

Traditional spray cleaners and microfiber clothes are great for maintenance, however, skin oils and make-up often work their way into the lens edge where it can be dragged across the lens when cleaning them, leaving you with greasy lenses. You could take a trip back to where you bought your spectacles so your optician can remove the lenses and clean them more thoroughly, with some materials it is also possible to repolish the surface from time to time too.

**My glasses tend to fog up when I'm wearing a face mask. Is there anything I can do?**

Misting spectacle lenses is due to condensation, so a temperature differential between the temperature of your lenses and your out-breath creates water droplets to form on your lenses. One solution is to warm your glasses up before putting them on but be careful not to be excessive as coated lenses can be damaged by direct heat, a hair dryer at approx. 60cm will gently warm them.

Alternatively, as a response to the increase in face mask wearing, the optical industry has developed special clothes that can be used to polish your lenses which leaves a surface coating that also effectively stops them misting up again.

# Healthy

# EYES

Our diet can have a huge impact on our sight. Leanda Beynon, a Dispensing Optician and Holistic Therapist specialising in Clinical and Advanced Holistic Nutrition, reveals why nutrition is so important for eye health...

**C**an diet really effect the health of our eyes? The quick answer is yes.

You hear a lot in the news about how we should be healthier and how diet plays a role in this. Well, for your eye this is so true; time and time again scientists have linked certain food to better health and the absence of some diseases. For eyes we are talking about dry eye disease, age-related macular degeneration and, to some extent, glaucoma and cataracts.

As we live longer as a population, we then encounter more diseases as we age and are less able to produce or absorb the nutrition we need. Eating a balanced diet including five to nine portions of fruit and veg a day, including dark green leafy vegetables daily, and a least two portions of oily fish a week go a long way towards this, as well as plenty of water and, believe it or not, the occasional glass of red wine and chocolate!

## Essential nutrients

So, what nutrients are important for good eye health? Let's start with fish: I'm talking the oily kind, such as sardines,

herring, mackerel and salmon, which contain a substance called omega-3, one of the body's essential fatty acids. We can't make it ourselves, so we must eat it. Omega-3 helps with conditions such as dry eye and reduces inflammation. It's an all-round good guy when it comes to eye health. There are vegetarian and vegan alternatives to fish-based omega-3, which are shown in the chart

As well as omega-3, there are several vitamins and minerals which play an important role in eye health. Nutrients such as vitamin A, vitamin B complex, vitamin C, vitamin D, vitamin E, lutein and zeaxanthin, along with the minerals zinc, copper selenium, manganese and resveratrol are all players in keeping our eyes healthy.





### Food sources

So, which food are rich in eye friendly nutrients? As we have already mentioned, fruit, vegetables and fish are the headline act, but a balanced diet also includes protein, carbohydrates, some good fats, and fluids, such as water, herbal teas and fruit juices. As we are talking about what is good for your eyes, I should mention the bad guys too: try to avoid excessive sugar, processed food, excessive alcohol, and smoking.

Below is a chart showing food sources rich in nutrients specifically for the eye.

NUTRIENT	ALTERNATIVE NAME	FOOD SOURCE
Vitamin A	Beta-Carotene	Kale, spinach, broccoli, eggs, liver, milk
The B Vitamins		
Vitamin B1	Thiamine	Baked potato, wholegrains, liver, orange juice
Vitamin B2	Riboflavin	Mixed vegetables, eggs, tuna, liver
Vitamin B3	Niacin	Soybeans, peanut butter, salmon, liver
Vitamin B6	Pyridoxine	Lentils, soybeans, avocado, red meat
Vitamin B9	Folate	Brussel sprouts, melon, citrus fruit, lentils, liver
Vitamin B12		Dairy products, blue cheese, eggs, oily fish
		• Please note B12 is not in plant-based foods, vegetarians and vegans are recommended use of fortified dairy alternatives.
Vitamin C		Broccoli, orange juice, kale, tomatoes, spring greens
Vitamin D		Salmon, mackerel, vitamin D fortified milk, sunlight
Vitamin E		Broccoli, spinach, walnuts, almonds, sunflower seeds
Lutein and Zeaxanthin		Dark green leafy vegetables, including kale and spinach
Zinc		Chickpeas, lentils, seeds, red meat, shellfish
Copper		Beef liver, oysters, nuts, shellfish, offal
Selenium		Brazil nuts, fish, meat, eggs
Manganese		Nuts, green leafy vegetables, wholegrains
Resveratrol		Red wine, red grape juice, dark chocolate, blueberries
Omega-3		Oily fish (sardines, mackerel, salmon), walnuts, chia seeds, flax seeds, seaweed



In terms of whether it makes a difference whether foods are fresh, frozen or canned, the general rule is the fresher the better.

Foods which are frozen or canned soon after picking may even contain higher levels of nutrient than fresh as they have been preserved at the time or soon after picking, keeping the nutritional content preserved as well. Fresh foods, on the other hand, start to lose their vitamins and minerals from the moment they are picked.

So, in conclusion, fresh, frozen or canned are all good ways of getting your five-a-day. Depending on the individual fruit or veg, the nutrition content may vary. If you are eating plenty of varied fruit and veg, how it arrives on your plate can vary but the important thing is that we are eating it.

### Cooking tips

How do we maintain nutrients when we are preparing food? First, keep food as fresh as possible by keeping it in the best condition: refrigeration is a good way to slow down nutrient loss. Don't leave fruit and veg hanging around in the fridge for days before eating it, the nutrients will start to degrade. We have all left broccoli in the fridge for a while and seen it turn yellow, that is the nutrient lutein and zeaxanthin leaching out and the broccoli degrading. Buying a little and often is a good way to keep foods fresher.

When preparing food remember as soon as you cut fruit and veg, there is another surface to it to lose nutrition through oxidation. So, try not to prepare fruit and veg in advance, and don't leave it soaking in water, the nutrition will float away.

Cooking sometimes destroys nutrients, which is why some people advocate a diet of totally raw food. I think a good mixture of raw and cooked is fine. Certainly, overcooking

foods for too long or at too high a temperature can destroy many of their beneficial vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients, and may even produce harmful free radicals.

As a rule, cook fruit and vegetables for as little time as possible, steaming, microwaving or stir frying are all good options. If you are boiling vegetables add them to water which is already boiling as this reduces the cooking time and don't salt the water because the salt draws nutrients such as potassium, folate, and vitamin C out of the vegetables and it is lost into the water. Use the cooking water to make stock and sauces and save the nutrients in the process.

Avoid peeling fruit and vegetables so that you retain the nutrients which are just under the skin.

### Supplement support

If you are young, fit and healthy and eat a good varied and balanced diet, then you should get all the nutrition you need from your food.

As we get older, we don't tend to eat as well, and our bodies don't absorb nutrients as well. If you have eye problems such as dry eye or macular degeneration, then it is well worth thinking about supplementing your diet with eye specific supplements.

Other groups of the population who may benefit would be those with a family history of eye disease, and people who are over 40 and are concerned about eye health. Vegetarians and vegans may also benefit from increasing the intake of omega-3 and vitamin B 12.

Article by Leanda Beynon FBDO, Dispensing Optician, S.N.H.S. Dip (Holistic Nutrition), S.N.H.S. Dip (Advanced Nutrition), S.N.H.S. Dip (Vegetarian and Vegan Nutrition)

**Fish4Ever was founded on the idea of bringing organic values to sustainability in fish.**



Rated a world beating 89% by Greenpeace, our Skipjack isn't only the best option in ethical terms, it's also the best for quality. That's because our little island factory in the Azores only works from whole fish rather than frozen pre-processed loins – and we only add really good, natural and organic ingredients. Using named, locally owned and operated pole and lines boats this is tuna you can trust – for taste and sustainability

[fish4ever.co.uk](http://fish4ever.co.uk)



# Feast your eyes

Be inspired in the kitchen with this selection of mouth-watering recipes, rich in eye-friendly nutrients.

Serves 4 – 6  
Prep time: 1h 15min  
Can be frozen

## Fish Cakes with Yoghurt

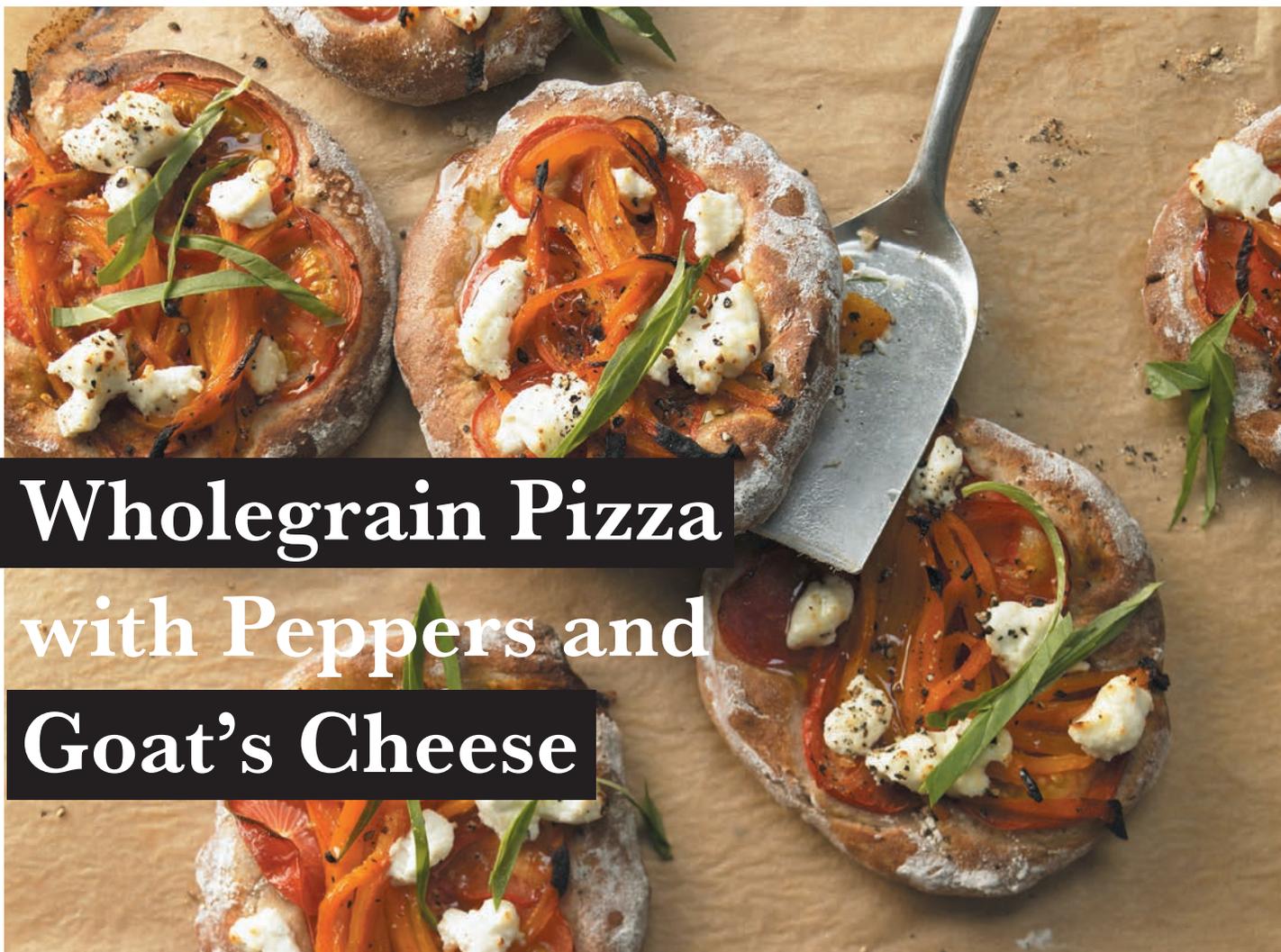
### INGREDIENTS:

- 600 ml whole milk
- 2 bay leaves
- 600 g skinless cod fillet (pin-boned)
- 1 kg floury potatoes, peeled and diced
- 80 g cream cheese, softened
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 tbsp cornflour, plus extra for dusting
- 2 tbsp chives, chopped
- 2 tbsp flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- 150 g breadcrumbs
- 225 g plain Greek yoghurt, to serve
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges, to serve
- Salt and ground black pepper

### METHOD:

1. Combine the milk and bay leaves in a shallow pan. Bring to a simmer, place the cod in the milk, and cover with a lid.
2. Simmer gently until the cod is just firm to the touch and slightly opaque in appearance, 3-4 minutes.
3. Remove the cod to a plate lined with kitchen paper to drain. Let cool.
4. Meanwhile, cook the potatoes in a large saucepan of salted, boiling water until tender, 20-25 minutes.
5. While the potatoes cook, preheat the oven to 190°C (170° fan) | 375F | gas 5. Line a baking tray with parchment paper.
6. Drain the potatoes and return to the saucepan to dry slightly, 2-3 minutes. Add the cream cheese, egg, and cornflour; mash well until smooth.
7. Once the cod is cool enough to handle, flake the flesh into the potato, mixing thoroughly.
8. Add the herbs, plus salt and pepper to taste. Stir thoroughly to combine.
9. Shape the mixture into six thick patties using slightly oiled hands. Dust in some cornflour, shaking off the excess, and then transfer to a large dish of the breadcrumbs, turning to coat (press the breadcrumbs into the cakes with your fingers).
10. Arrange the cakes on the baking tray, spaced apart.
11. Bake until golden-brown and crisp at the edges, turning once halfway, 20-25 minutes.
12. Remove from the oven and transfer to a platter. Serve with yoghurt and lemon wedges on the side.





# Wholegrain Pizza

## with Peppers and Goat's Cheese

For 4 - 6 servings  
Prep time: 40 min  
Rising time: 1 h 15 min  
Total time: 1 h 55 min

### INGREDIENTS:

#### *For the dough*

- 2 ¼ tsp active dry yeast
- 250 ml lukewarm water, at ~43°C | 110F
- 1 pinch sugar
- 1 ½ tsp salt
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for greasing and drizzling
- 125 g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 125-175 g wholemeal flour

#### *For the toppings:*

- 2 red peppers, cored, seeded, and cut into strips
- 250 g goat's cheese, roughly chopped
- 15 g | ½ cup basil leaves, thinly sliced

### DIRECTIONS:

1. For the pizza dough: stir together the yeast, water and sugar in a mixing bowl. Set aside until frothy, about 5-10 minutes.
2. Stir in the salt, olive oil, and plain flour until well combined. Gradually stir in most of the wholemeal flour, saving about 50 g, until a rough dough forms in the bowl.
3. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead to a soft, smooth dough, 6-8 minutes; add the reserved wholemeal flour, as needed, if it's too sticky.
4. Place the dough in a clean bowl that's been greased with some olive oil, turning the dough to coat it. Loosely cover with a damp tea towel and let rise in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 hour.
5. Turn out the dough, divide it into six, and roll into balls, dividing them between two lightly greased baking trays (at least 35 cm | 14-inches wide).
6. Cover with a damp tea towel and let rest for 15 minutes. Preheat the oven to 240°C (220° fan) | 475F | gas 9.
7. For the toppings: brush the dough with some olive oil. Top with peppers and goat cheese, drizzle with more oil.
8. Bake until the dough is cooked through, and the cheese is browned, 10-12 minutes.
9. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly before serving with a garnish of basil.



Serves 1 to 2

# Blueberry Blitz

## Vegan Smoothie

### INGREDIENTS:

200 g blueberries, fresh or frozen  
1 ripe banana, chopped  
250 ml non-dairy yoghurt

### METHOD:

1. Blitz all the ingredients in a blender until smooth.
2. Pour into glasses and serve immediately.

# REMOTE

# eye care

The rise of telehealth.



**T**elehealth, the delivery of health services and information via electronic means, really took off during the pandemic helping health professionals deliver vital care even during lockdown.

A recent poll conducted by Piplsay reveals that over the course of the pandemic more than one in three of us used telehealth services and when asked if we'd be prepared to continue using telehealth services after normality returns, just 40 per cent of Brits said 'no, they prefer face-to-face consultations'.

New technologies and innovations like the Open Optometry Test Chart project, which has been developed with funding support from the Central Optical Fund, will play an important role as telehealth continues to grow.

Charles Barlow, a Director of the Central Optical Fund said: "People like the ease and convenience of telehealth and in-person consultations are not always possible, so it's

essential that our eye care professionals have resources that allow them to deliver the first-class care patients enjoy in-practice. The Fund is proud to have supported this initiative".

The Open Optometry Test Chart project has used digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI) to create a toolkit of vision screening resources that are available free to optometrists and optical practice staff. These resources can be used to test visual acuity, including an assessment of the legal eyesight standards for driving, as well as screening for conditions such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and colour blindness, on a range of devices including tablets and mobile phones.

A legacy of the Covid pandemic is that telehealth will be integrated into our healthcare system and become a more widely used companion to in-person consultations. It's good to know that optics is preparing well for this change.

# TESTING TIMES

Regular eye examinations are so important, and for so many different reasons. *Vista* details what you can expect during a regular routine test.

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**R**egular eye tests are crucial for all of us, to check that our eyes are healthy and for any eye or health conditions to be found early to prevent further damage or other eye or health conditions from occurring as a result.

According to new research, two-thirds (66 per cent) of British adults admit to experiencing blurred vision and a third (35 per cent) believe their vision has markedly deteriorated in the past two years, with one in 10 choosing to sit closer to the television rather than having their eyes tested.

Yet despite this, almost 14 million people in the UK fail to have their eyes checked regularly as recommended by their optometrist. Many of who may be at risk of preventable sight loss, according to a report by the Royal National Institute of the Blind.

David Cartwright, Chairman at Eye Health UK, comments: "Poor uptake of eye tests is probably the biggest risk to the nation's eye health. A routine eye test can do more than assess your sight. It could save your life. Warning signs for a range of life-threatening illnesses can be detected by your optometrist."

## Eye tests explained

Routine eye examinations assess far more than just your sight.

"Every eye test is tailor-made, depending on your needs. Everyone should have an eye test every two years, or more often if your optometrist recommends it," explains Dr Ian Beasley, Optometrist and Head of Education at the Association of Optometrists (AOP).

He continues: "A regular eye test is important, not only because it offers a health check for your eyes, but as part of the examination your optometrist will be a number of checks, including picking up signs of eye disease (which is usually easier to deal with if found early), check your sight and make it clearer or more comfortable to see, answer questions and give advice about your eye health and vision, as well as keep you informed about

new products or services that can help you.

"Your optometrist will also check for signs of underlying general health issues that sometimes show in the eyes. This could mean that conditions such as diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure are first identified during your eye test."

You may need to have your eyes tested more regularly than the standard every two years too. Dr Beasley explains why: "You might be at higher risk where you have a family history of an eye condition, from long- and short-sightedness to a lazy eye, or something more serious, such as glaucoma. It might be necessary for you to have a more regular check-up, for example, as you get older, to monitor your vision; your optometrist will advise you."



## **FREE EYE TESTS**

More than 30 million people in the UK are entitled to free eye tests paid for by the NHS. If you regularly use a computer at work, you may be entitled to eye tests paid for by your employer.



### What to expect

We know that regular sight tests are essential, but what can you expect to actually occur during your eye test?

Dr Parmadeep Bilkhu MCOptom, Clinical Adviser at the College of Optometrists, explains: "At the start of the appointment, your optometrist will ask if you are visiting for a routine check-up or if your visit is for a specific reason. They will ask about your general health, including any medication you are taking or have any close relatives with a history of eye problems. You will also be asked if you wear glasses or contact lenses and they may also ask about the kind of work you do and whether you play sports or have any hobbies."

He continues: "The optometrist will examine the outside and inside of your eyes. The inside of your eyes will be examined using an ophthalmoscope, which is a special torch, or with a slit lamp and a handheld lens in front of your eye. The optometrist will determine whether you need spectacles, and if so, they will determine the best prescription for you. This will involve you looking at letters, numbers, shapes or pictures on a chart and saying whether various lenses make it more or less blurry."

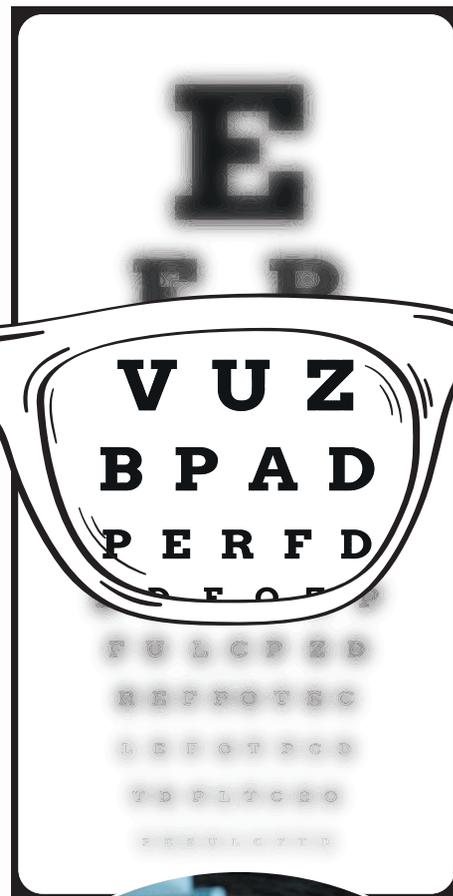
Remember to take your glasses or

contact lenses with you if you already use them.

Dr Beasley adds: "Your optometrist

will check what you can see – close-up and in distance – usually using special charts of symbols or letters. This may be with or without your glasses. They will then work out whether you need glasses or a change of prescription with a series of tests using different lenses.

"This will also involve simple questions and you should try to answer these as accurately and honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers, so don't worry. For those who are unable to answer these questions, there are other ways of working out a glasses prescription. This is particularly useful for children or those with learning difficulties or special educational needs."



There may be other checks that will be performed.

"Your optometrist will also carry out tests on your eye muscles to check how your eyes are working together. Sometimes, it may be necessary to check your peripheral vision using a special instrument," explains Dr Beasley. "This tests for certain conditions of the eyes or the visual parts of your brain. You may also need an eye pressure test, which is one of the procedures used to detect glaucoma."

■ Check out the [Eye Health Calculator](#) to find out if you could be doing more to keep your eyes healthy.

# VISTA'S top picks



## FEEDING YOUR VISION

Screen Eyes™ is the most comprehensive formula for adults and teenagers to feed eyes with nutrients for vision health. Eyes are exposed to light damage and oxidative stress caused by digital screens. Screen Eyes™ enriches the macular pigment, protecting the eye's sensitive areas and helping reduce the risk of age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Formulated by experts, Screen Eyes™ includes the carotenoids Lutein (15mg), Meso-zeaxanthin (10mg), Zeaxanthin (2mg), and Astaxanthin (2mg), Bilberry (50mg) and Vitamins A, B2, C, E and Zinc. Screen Eyes™ is available at [www.drvegan.com](http://www.drvegan.com) £19.99 or £16.99 on subscription. Wholesale now available.



## THE EYE LOGIC RANGE

From preventative eye care to daily eye care, Eye Logic has been formulated with carefully researched ingredients for optimum eye health. The Eye Logic range includes:

- *Eye logic™ Nutri Eye* which builds upon the science and research into eye health, combining twelve nutrients in a gold standard one a day formulation.
- *Eye Logic eye drops* for dry eyes which helps relieve symptoms of dry eyes quickly, easily and effectively.
- *Eye Logic eye spray* is a fast, effective relief from dry eye syndrome, simply spray onto the CLOSED eyelid for ease and convenience.

To celebrate National Eye Health Week we are offering 33% off Eye Logic from 20th-26th September 2021 at [www.inspiredhealth.co.uk](http://www.inspiredhealth.co.uk)

## MINAMI LIQUID KIDS EPA + DHA

Introducing the new superior strength liquid Omega-3 for kids with added vitamin D3. It comes in a highly bioavailable triglyceride form, with a balanced ratio of EPA and DHA for children age 1+. A sustainably sourced and 'Friend of the Sea' fish oil for the healthy development of brain, vision, bone and immune function in children. Each batch is tested for heavy metals, contaminants and toxins. Minami is free from lactose, gluten, solvents, fillers and saturated fats.

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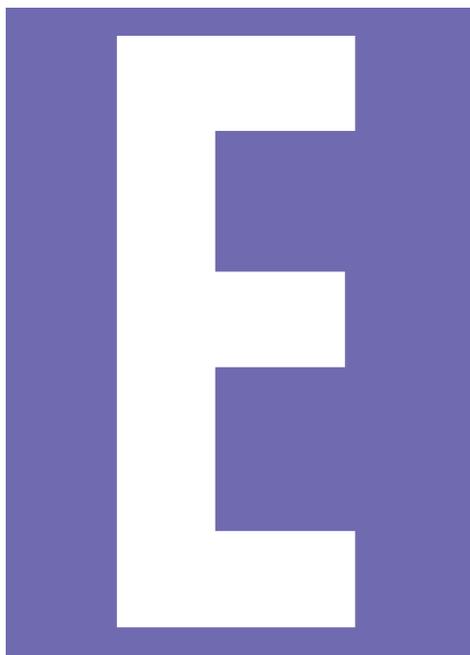


## VISION PLUS 90 CAPSULES

Vision Plus includes the exciting, new macular carotenoid extract called Lutemax® 2020. Designed to support eye health, it includes vitamin C, zinc and copper, together with carotenoids important for eye health – lutein, zeaxanthin and meso-zeaxanthin. It also contains good levels of taurine, lipoic acid and bilberry – powerful ingredients to support healthy eyes. Lutein is an important carotenoid found to be concentrated on the outer edges of the macula, RR-zeaxanthin in the mid-outer and RS (meso)-zeaxanthin in the central macula. Studies consistently show that all three work as antioxidants, and may help to protect against oxidative stress.

[www.nutriadvanced.co.uk](http://www.nutriadvanced.co.uk)





Did you know that exercise can help support good eye health? Now's the time to focus on your fitness and get active.

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**W**e all know how important being active is for our general health and wellbeing, but few realise that staying active is important for good eye health.

Regular physical activity can help increase oxygen supplies to the optic nerve and lower any pressure that builds up in the eye; reducing intraocular 'eye' pressure (IOP) can help control conditions such as glaucoma and ocular hypertension.

In fact, research reveals that IOP can be lowered by exercise that raises the pulse just 20 to 25 per cent, which is good news for glaucoma sufferers and those at risk of the condition. A brisk walk is great way to get your pulse pumping.

Regular physical activity can improve blood flow to the retina and the optic nerve and can reduce the harmful overgrowth of blood vessels in the eyes, which could cause and accelerate macular degeneration – the UK's leading cause of sight loss.

Exercise also improves insulin resistance and lipid profiles, both of which have been associated with an increased risk of age-related cataracts (ARC). Recent research found a 10 per cent reduction in ARC among people who engaged in regular physical activity such as walking and cycling.

In addition, aerobic exercise has been found to prevent the progression of diabetes, which in severe cases can lead to diabetic retinopathy and total sight loss.



# TIME FOR EXERCISE

Sport England has these top tips to help you start living an active lifestyle...

**S**port England says: "We understand that if you're new to getting active it can feel a bit scary, so we've put together some top tips to help you get started and feel the physical and mental benefits that even small increases in physical activity can bring."

## 1. MOVE MORE BY MAKING SMALL CHANGES

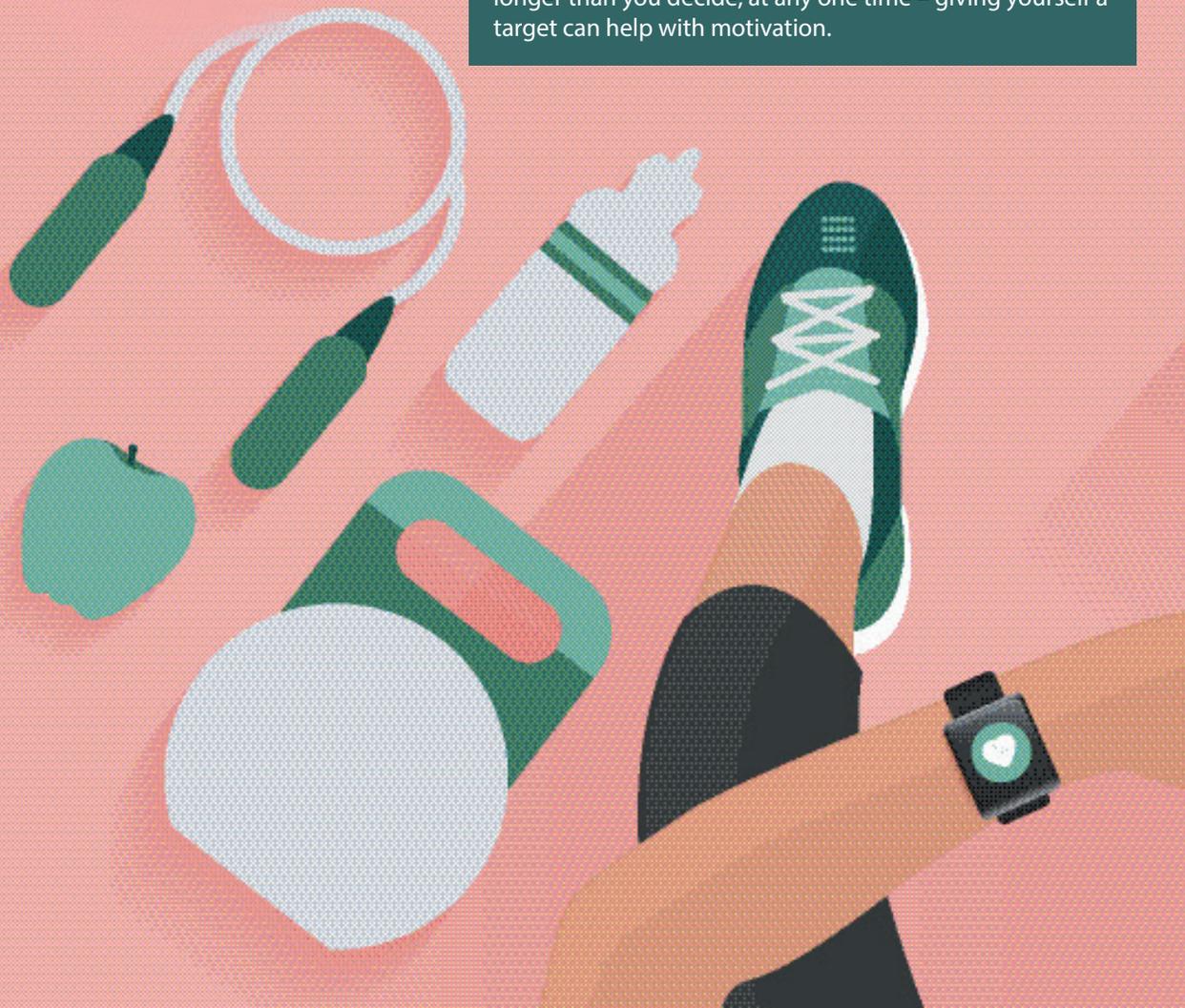
However you choose to move, it's all good for your health and wellbeing. Making small changes to your routine by including small bursts of activity across your day all add up and help you move more. So, whether it's a 10-minute seated or yoga workout in the morning, a cycle or walk with your household at lunch, playing with your children in the garden, if you have one, or even moving when talking on the phone – every little helps.

## 2. CHOOSE ACTIVITIES YOU ENJOY

Doing something you enjoy means you're far more likely to keep doing it. Try out different activities until you find one you like and works for you. Moving with your household, if you live with others, can help when motivation dips, and listening to music while getting active can also make it more enjoyable.

## 3. SET GOALS AND MAKE A PLAN

A plan and goals covering how, when and where you'll get active can really help. It doesn't have to be a fully-fledged personal training programme, but just focusing on what you want to do a bit more, or less, of each day can make a difference. So, whether it's walking for a set amount of time at lunch, every day for a week, or sitting down for no longer than you decide, at any one time – giving yourself a target can help with motivation.





# 10 Family Days Out

Family Traveller share their top 10 UK family attractions for days out with the kids.

UK family attractions are finally open again, which is great news if you've been missing those fun days out with the kids that we used to take for granted. Here are 10 of the best UK family attractions.

## 1. HOBbledown, EPSOM

One of the most magical UK attractions for younger children, Hobbledown covers 50 acres and has more than enough for several amazing family days out. A huge indoor play barn makes it perfect for rainy days, and farm animals, an aerial adventure course, zorbing, gigantic jumping pillows, enormous slides and enchanting Hobbledown Village are just a few of the outdoor activities here. If kids want close encounters with the wildest of creatures, there's even a Raptor Centre populated with some of the world's fiercest birds of prey.

## 2. ST FAGANS NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY, CARDIFF

If you're looking for unusual UK family attractions St Fagans National Museum of History in Cardiff offers an incredible insight into traditional Welsh life hundreds of years ago. Take a wander through the recreated rural village and try your hand at pottery on the outdoor wheel. Local craftsmen demonstrate their trade around the museum, and the grounds of the beautiful Grade I listed castle are the ideal place for a spring or summer family picnic.

## 3. LEGOLAND WINDSOR, WINDSOR

Another of the major UK family attractions, Legoland Windsor attracted a lot of excitement this year with the launch of Mythica – the UK's first ever flying theatre ride. The park also features 55 themed rides, DUPLO Playtown, Castaway Camp and Lego Miniland, where almost every iconic world landmark is reconstructed in miniature using only LEGO, so there's plenty to keep kids busy.

## 4. KNOCKHATCH, HAILSHAM

A farm, soft play park, waterpark and small theme park rolled into one, Knockhatch is another one of the UK family attractions where it's easy to spend an entire day out with kids. Visit the owl sanctuary, take part in a hands-on little critters show or ride on the carousel. Don't miss the Meerkat Experience and leave plenty of time to explore the incredibly imaginative and exciting Dragon Castle, complete with 30m long dual zip-lines.



## 5. HEVER CASTLE AND GARDENS, KENT

The childhood home of Anne Boleyn, Hever Castle is one of the historic UK family attractions which has just as much going on outdoors as it does in. The stunning grounds are spread over 125 acres and include an enormous lake, formal gardens and walks, as well as ramble-worthy woodland. Children's archery lessons and shield painting activities are happening right now. And the fact that Hever recommends at least an hour and a half to explore the gardens alone is a clue to the potential for a full day out with kids here.

## 6. DRUSILLAS PARK, SUSSEX

Red Pandas, Chilean Flamingo and Silvery Marmosets are just a few of the wild creatures looking forward to seeing kids at Drusillas Park. For wildness of another sort, this fun family attraction has waterparks, soft play parks and the best under-six play area in Sussex. Older kids will like Amazon Adventure, Jurassic Jungle and Mungo's Adventure Maze.

## 7. BEWILDERWOOD, CHESHIRE

Top of the UK family attractions which actively encourage kids to be as wild as they want, BeWILDerwood is an enormous forest packed with fun stuff and makes a great family day out. A mix of fantasy and activity and storytelling and creative play, it's designed like a vast magical playground with friendly Twiggles (Bewilderwood staff) on hand to add to the adventure. And it's not just for kids, parents are welcome to join in as well. So if your inner child's been cooped up too long, this is the place to release them into the wild.

## 8. ALTON TOWERS, STAFFORDSHIRE

Well known for mixing up terrifying white knuckle experiences with gentler thrills, this is one of the UK family attractions that can truthfully say it has something for everyone, from rollercoasters like Th13teen right through to Cbeebies Land. And brand new for this year, Gangsta Granny: The Ride.

## 9. WARWICK CASTLE AND KNIGHTS VILLAGE, WARWICK

UK family attractions don't come much grander than Warwick Castle, which has just launched Zog and the Quest for the Golden Star: a brand new 3D interactive trail based on Julia Donaldson's bestselling children's book, Zog. As well as dragon-themed thrills, kids can look forward to puzzling out the Horrible Histories' Maze, meeting the dressed-up castle characters and getting up to all sorts of medieval fun and games around the castle's 64-acre grounds.

## 10. TUMBLESTONE HOLLOW, STONOR PARK, HENLEY-ON-THAMES

Tumblestone Hollow is a new adventure playground in the grounds of one of England's oldest stately homes, Stonor Park. Over 18 months in the making, Tumblestone Hollow looks enchanting and comes good on all the stuff kids love from high rope walkways and towers to bridges, dens, treehouses and climbing nets. The Hollow Hut serves up coffee to spectating parents – it also has a woodfired pizza oven. And if you want to take a little of the magic home, there's even a storybook to go with the playground; aptly named, The Legend of Tumblestone Hollow.

Find more UK family attractions at Family Traveller and follow them on Facebook and Instagram for more days out with kids' ideas, holiday news and travel updates.

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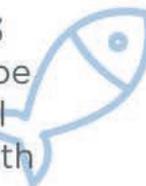
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let's open our eyes

# “My biggest role model apart from Muhammad Ali would be my dad”



Halifax boxer and ortho-k contact lens wearer, Khalid Ayub, 19, on pre-match nerves and boxing as an artform.

By Selina Powell, Assistant Editor of Optometry Today

**M**y dad was a boxer when he was younger. When I was three, he got me a punch ball. My dad didn't think much about it – it was just something for if I was bored. When I was 10 years old, I had my first fight. From there, I have never looked back. I've won four English titles; I have won a Great Britain title and I have represented England within international tournaments.

I have never been pushed into boxing, although my dad got me into it. I have found a love for it. For people who don't know, boxing just seems like a punch up, but I don't think of it like that. Boxing is a tough sport, but I see it more as an art form.

I look up to Muhammad Ali. Although he was criticised at the time, after he retired and even now, people look up to him because of the way he was inside and outside of the ring. His style was so different to all the others from that time period. A lot of people doubted him, but he never had any doubt in himself.

I do get nervous, but I feel that the

nerves help me to perform better because I am more alert. Once I am in the ring I am alright – it is just the build up to the fight. When you are in the ring, you block out the crowd because of the adrenalin.

I have been wearing Eyedream ortho-k lenses for about eight months. It is amazing. I only wear them at night so when I go out, I am just like anyone who doesn't wear contact lenses or glasses. It is a real game changer.

I can judge the distance and be more confident in my boxing. Ortho-k gives me the ability to do what I want and to box at close, mid and long range comfortably. I don't have the risk of a contact lens falling out or sweat irritating my eyes.

My optician, Simon [Mann, from Daybell and Choo, part of Hakim Group], has helped me so much with them. He has been patient and worked hard to make sure that I am getting the best experience for my boxing and life in general.

My ultimate goal is to become a world champion. I work hard; I am

dedicated and disciplined. Everything I do is focused on boxing. With every training session I put my all into it because I believe that's the attitude you have to have to get to the top.

My biggest role model apart from Muhammad Ali would be my dad. We are always together when it comes to boxing. Without him I wouldn't have started boxing. Everything that I have done is because of him. I always listen to my dad and take in what he says. My parents do worry, but they know that I put everything into training. From their perspective, they know that I have done the preparation before I go in the ring.

*Halifax boxer and ortho-k contact lens wearer, Khalid Ayub, 19, claimed English and Great Britain titles as an amateur boxer, representing England at international competitions. He is now a professional boxer signed by MTK Global.*

**This article has been reproduced with kind permission of Optometry Today, the journal of the Association of Optometrists.**

# MINI AUTUMN ADVENTURES

Spending time in the great outdoors can actually benefit your sight. Here's our pick of family outdoor adventures.

It's time to dust off those wellies and head out into the great outdoors for some fun family time. Not only does spending time outside improve your health and wellbeing, it is also beneficial for your eye health and can help reduce myopia (short-sightedness) in children.

Here's *Vista's* guide to outdoor fun for kids of all ages...



## 🌸 GO ON A GARDEN BUG HUNT

How many creatures can you find hiding in your garden? Try counting how many different species you can find. Grab a magnifying glass to take a closer look – how many legs has the bug got? Is it hairy? Draw pictures of what you find and create a colourful gallery of minibeasts.

## 🌸 CREATE PATIO ART

Encourage your budding Van Gough to get creative and produce a giant artwork on your patio or garden path. Use chalks to create colourful designs that will simply get washed away in the rain.





## ENJOY A BIKE RIDE

Whether you're going for a ride around your local park or travelling along part of the 13,500 miles that make up the **National Cycle Network**, cycling is a great way to enjoy the outdoors.



## COOK UP A FEAST IN A MUD KITCHEN

All you need to make a basic mud kitchen are some old pots and pans, a couple of spoons, a patch of earth or bucket of mud (top soil is great) and water. Kids can while away hours getting messy, mixing up mud pies and foraging for decorative toppings.



## GROW YOUR OWN

Nothing tastes better than fruit and veg you've grown yourself, so whether you sew a few cress seeds in an old yoghurt pot or create your very own garden allotment, you can enjoy the tasty rewards of time spent outdoors tending to your crops.



## ROLL PLAY

Make action dice from cube-shaped cardboard boxes. Draw or write a forfeit or action on each side of the cardboard box, for example, do a roly poly, jump like a frog, run a lap of the garden, floss! Then, roll or throw the dice and follow the action.



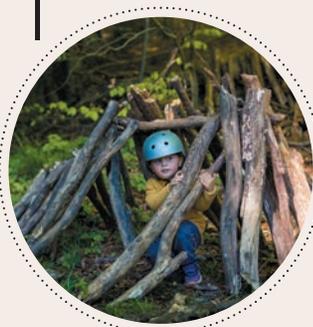
## SCAVENGER HUNT

Scavenger hunts are great fun and you can play them almost anywhere. Try a colour-themed hunt and track down objects from every colour in the rainbow.



## BUILD A DEN

Whether you're creating a den using cushions and blankets or branches and bracken, den building is fun for all the family.



## GO BIRDWATCHING

Go for a walk and see how many different types of birds you can spot. The **RSPB website** has a great step-by-step guide to birdwatching for beginners.



## NATURE CRAFT

Make a self-portrait using materials you can find in your garden or local park. Use sticks, leaves, berries, stones, grass cuttings, feathers, conkers and moss to create your masterpiece.



## PUDDLE JUMPING

Get out whatever the weather. Pull on your wellies and go splash about in puddles.





# Falls Prevention

Don't be blind to the risk of falls.

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**P**oor vision more than doubles your risk of taking a tumble<sup>1</sup>.

Not only can impaired or low vision prevent you spotting hazards it can also affect your balance – just close your eyes for a moment or two and you'll begin to feel yourself sway; in fact, sway increases 50 per cent or more with eyes closed compared with eyes open<sup>2</sup>.

Our vision steadily declines as we age so it's no surprise that poor vision is a major contributory factor to falls in the over-60s. Around one in three adults over 65 who live at home have at least one fall a year, and about half of these will experience falls more frequently<sup>3</sup>.

Falls can be distressing and impact on your quality of life. In extreme cases fall related injuries can even lead to death. More than five thousand people in the UK died as a result of a fall in 2017<sup>4</sup>.

Three quarters of older people who suffer a fall as a result of poor vision had a visual impairment that was easily correctable<sup>5</sup>. This could be as simple as getting a new prescription for your glasses or having cataract surgery.

Regular sight tests are important for everyone to keep your eyes and vision healthy. Sight tests are free for the over 60s as they are paid for by the NHS. If you require prescription eyewear talk to your dispensing optician about appropriate uses for your glasses.

If you have more than one pair, it can sometimes be confusing deciding which pair to wear for which task. A simple coding system such as putting a red dot on your reading glasses – red for reading – could help prevent vision impairment because you're wearing the wrong glasses.

## REFERENCES

<sup>[1]</sup> Visual impairment increases the risk of suffering a fall by 2.5 times [Rubenstein and Josephson 2002].

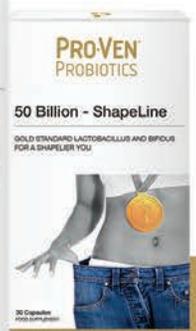
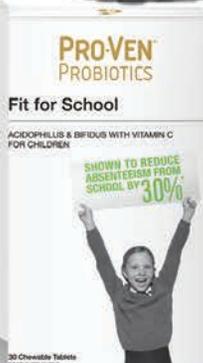
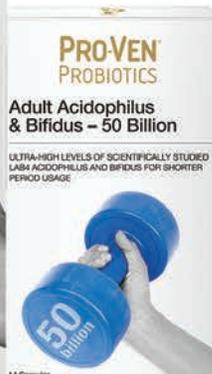
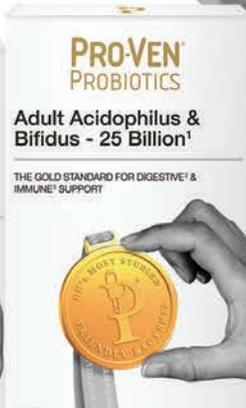
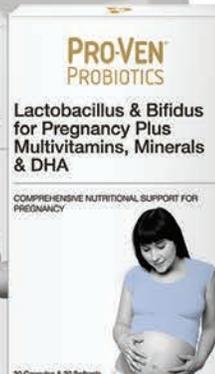
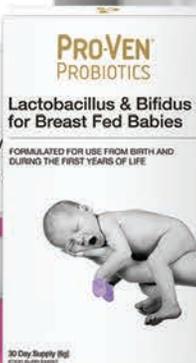
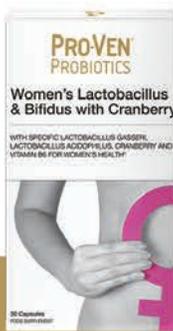
<sup>[2]</sup> Lord SR, Ward JA, Williams P, Anstey KJ. Physiological factors associated with falls in older community-dwelling women. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 1994; 42: 1110–7. Lord SR, Clark RD, Webster IW. Postural stability and associated physiological factors in a population of aged persons. *J Gerontology* 1991; 46: M69–76

<sup>[3]</sup> Generation Eye Report 2017

<sup>[4]</sup> More than 5,000 older people in the UK died due to a fall in 2017 [ONS]

<sup>[5]</sup> Jack CI, et al. *Gerontology*.

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