

## May is Healthy Vision Month

This month was established by the National Eye Institute and aims to spread awareness and educate people about the risks of ignoring the health of their eyes.

Here are some easy steps to keep your eyes healthy:

### Eat Well

Good eye health starts with the food on your plate. These foods have nutrients shown to promote eye health.

- Green leafy vegetables like spinach, kale, and collards
- Salmon, tuna, and other oily fish
- Eggs, nuts, beans, and other nonmeat protein sources
- Oranges and other citrus fruits or juices
- Oysters and pork

A well-balanced diet also helps you stay at a healthy weight. That lowers your odds of obesity and related diseases like Type 2 Diabetes, which is the leading cause of blindness in adults.

### Quit Smoking

It makes you more likely to get cataracts and can damage your optic nerve or cause macular degeneration.

### Wear Sunglasses

The right pair of shades will help protect your eyes from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays, even on cloudy days. Too much UV exposure boosts your chances of cataracts and macular degeneration.

Choose a pair that blocks 99% to 100% of UVA and UVB rays.

### Look Away from the Computer Screen

Staring at a computer or phone screen for too long can cause:

- Eyestrain
- Blurry vision
- Trouble focusing at a distance.
- Headaches
- Neck, back, and shoulder pain
- Dry eyes

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



---

## Use Safety Eyewear

If you use hazardous materials on the job or at home, wear safety glasses or protective goggles.

## Visit Your Eye Doctor Regularly

Everyone needs a regular eye exam, even young children. It helps protect your sight and lets you see your best.

## Find out if you're at risk for eye disease.

Getting older increases your risk of some eye diseases. You might also have a higher risk of some eye diseases if you:

- Are overweight or obese.
- Have a family history of eye disease.
- Are African American, Hispanic, or Native American

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

---

---

---

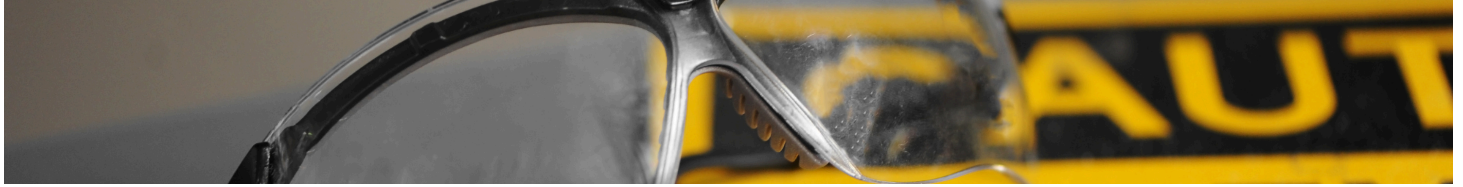


## Employee Vision Benefits

Getting your eyes checked regularly is important even if you do not wear glasses or contacts. Did you know if you're enrolled for the medical plan, you can receive an annual eye exam through CommunityCare at no co-pay for in-network services? Your screening includes annual vision screening, glaucoma screening and refraction for glasses. Contracted providers also offer a 10-15% discount for eyeglasses and contacts purchased at the vision providers office. Search for an in-network vision provider at [www.cot.ccok.com](http://www.cot.ccok.com) or call CommunityCare customer service at 918-594-4006.

If you're enrolled for the Vision Plan through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma (EyeMed Select Network) you can receive eye exams and lenses for a small co-pay, and an allowance for contacts and frames based on the tier you've enrolled for. You can log online to view the EyeMed network at [www.eyemedvisioncare.com/bcbsokvis](http://www.eyemedvisioncare.com/bcbsokvis). To learn more about the vision coverage, you can review the Vision Plan Summaries in the 2024 Benefit Guide book on page 21. You can also call BCBS with questions at 855-856-4402.

Employees covered by many Collective Bargaining Agreement's (CBA's) may be eligible for a subsidy towards the purchase of prescription safety eyewear per fiscal year. Employees performing work who need prescription safety eyewear should refer to their CBA's, found here: <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/human-resources/union-agreements/> for information on allowable amounts.



## Protecting Your Eyes at Work

Chemicals or foreign objects in the eye and scratches on the cornea are common eye injuries that occur at work. Other common eye injuries come from fluids splashed in the eye, burns from steam, and ultraviolet or infrared radiation exposure. In addition, healthcare workers, Wastewater operators, janitorial staff, and other workers may be at risk of acquiring infectious diseases from eye exposure. Some infectious diseases can be transmitted through the mucous membranes of the eye. This can occur through direct contact with splashes of blood, respiratory droplets generated during coughing, or from touching the eyes with contaminated fingers or other objects.

### Potential Eye Hazards at Work

Workplace eye protection is needed when the following potential eye hazards are present:

- Projectiles (dust, concrete, metal, wood, and other particles).
- Chemicals (splashes and fumes).
- Radiation (especially visible light, ultraviolet radiation, heat or infrared radiation, and lasers).
- Bloodborne pathogens (hepatitis or HIV) from blood and body fluids.

Some working conditions include multiple eye hazards. Proper eye protection takes all hazards into account.

The type of safety eye protection you should wear depends on the hazards in your workplace:

- If you are working in an area that has particles, flying objects or dust, you must at least wear safety glasses with side protection (side shields).
- If you are working with chemicals, you must wear goggles.
- If you are working near hazardous radiation (welding, lasers or fiber optics) you must use special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shields or helmets designed for that task.

Know the requirements for your work environment. Side shields placed on your conventional (dress) glasses do not provide enough protection to meet the OSHA requirement for many work environments.

In addition, departments need to take steps to make the work environment as safe as possible. This includes:

- Conducting hazard assessments of job tasks and work areas
- Removing or reducing eye hazards where possible
- Providing appropriate safety eyewear and requiring employees to wear it

---

## How can I protect my eyes from injury?

There are four things you can do to protect your eyes from injury:

1. Know the eye safety dangers at your work.
2. Eliminate hazards before starting work by using machine guards, work screens or other engineering controls.
3. Use proper eye protection.
4. Keep your safety eyewear in good condition and have it replaced if it becomes damaged.

Selection of protective eyewear appropriate for a given task should be made based on a hazard assessment of each activity. Types of eye protection include:

- **Nonprescription and prescription safety glasses**

- Although safety glasses may look like normal dress eyewear, they are designed to provide significantly more eye protection. The lenses and frames are much stronger than regular eyeglasses. Safety glasses must meet standards of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Look for the Z87 mark on the lens or frame.
- Safety glasses provide eye protection for general working conditions where there may be dust, chips or flying particles. Side shields and wraparound-style safety glasses can provide additional side protection.
- Safety lenses are available in plastic, polycarbonate and Trivex™ materials. While all four types must meet or exceed the minimum requirements for protecting your eyes, polycarbonate lenses provide the highest level of protection from impact.

- **Goggles**

- Goggles provide protection from impact, dust, and chemical splash. Like safety glasses, safety goggles are highly impact-resistant. In addition, they provide a secure shield around the entire eye and protect against hazards coming from any direction. Goggles can be worn over prescription glasses and contact lenses.

- **Face shields and helmets**

- Full-face shields protect workers exposed to chemicals, heat, or blood-borne pathogens. Helmets are used for welding or working with molten materials. Face shields and helmets should not be the only protective eyewear. They need to be used in conjunction with safety glasses or goggles, so the eyes are protected when the shield is lifted.

- **Special protection**

- Helmets or goggles with special filters to protect the eyes from optical radiation exposure should be used for welding or working with lasers.

Safety glasses must fit properly to provide adequate protection. Also, eye protection devices must be properly maintained. Scratched and dirty devices reduce vision, cause glare and may contribute to accidents.

---

---

## What should I do if an eye injury happens?

Seek medical attention as soon as possible following an injury, particularly if you have pain in the eye, blurred vision or loss of any vision. Several simple first aid steps can and should be taken until medical assistance is obtained.

### **First aid for chemicals in the eye:**

- Immediately flush the eye with water for at least 15 minutes. Place the eye under a faucet or shower, use a garden hose, or pour water into the eye from a clean container.
- If you are wearing contact lenses, immediately remove them before flushing the eye.
- Do not try to neutralize the chemical with other substances.
- Do not bandage the eye.
- Seek immediate medical attention after flushing.

### **First aid for particles in the eye:**

- Do not rub the eye.
- Try to let your tears wash the speck out, or irrigate the eye with an artificial tear solution.
- Try lifting the upper eyelid outward and down over the lower eyelid to remove the particle.
- If the particle does not wash out, keep the eye closed, bandage it lightly and seek medical care.
- Some particles, particularly metallic ones, can cause rusting spots on the eye if left untreated for several days. If you are unsure if the object is gone, do not delay medical care.

### **First aid for blows to the eye:**

- Gently apply a cold compress without putting pressure on the eye. Crushed ice in a plastic bag can be placed gently on the injured eye to reduce pain and swelling.
- In cases of severe pain or reduced vision, seek immediate medical care.

### **First aid for cuts and punctures to the eye or eyelid:**

- Do not wash out the eye.
- Do not attempt to remove an object that is stuck in the eye.
- Cover the eye with a rigid shield, like the bottom half of a paper cup.
- Seek immediate medical care.

For information on the City of Tulsa's policy on the use of personal protective equipment and the Prescription Safety Eyewear Program visit the [Safety & Training SharePoint Site](#).

