

March is Save Your Vision Month

Wisconsin Optometrists encourage citizens to protect their vision and eye health

MADISON, WIS.— Over the past four decades, Save Your Vision Month has played a critical role in educating the public on the importance of proper vision and eye health care. Championing this cause are members of the Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA) who want to remind all citizens to protect their eyes in school, at home, while playing sports and, perhaps most importantly, at work. Whether using a computer or a sledge hammer to get the job done, the **(WOA)** reports visual discomfort, eye strain and eye injuries in the workplace are not only common, but cost billions in lost productivity each year. Research indicates that 2,000 U.S. workers sustain job-related eye injuries requiring medical treatment each day, 90 percent of which could be prevented with simple safety steps.

“Healthy vision is critical to successfully completing job-related tasks,” said Dr. Lisa Slaby, optometrist and President of the Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA). “While most people think of construction or manufacturing as high-risk occupations where eye injuries are prevalent, even jobs requiring “smart phones,” laptops and desktop computers can cause vision problems if not used properly. Small steps can make big changes to ease vision strain.”

Go Easy on the PDA

Nearly half of all Americans spend five or more hours per day using a computer or a PDA (personal digital assistant), according to the **American Optometric Association’s (AOA)** American Eye-Q survey (2009). Prolonged use of electronic devices may lead to symptoms of Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) such as eye strain, dry eyes, headaches, fatigue, blurred vision and loss of focus.

The WOA encourages all users of this type of technology to follow the recommendations below, which will go a long way in keeping productivity up and discomfort down while working on electronic devices:

- ✓ Rest eyes by taking a 20 second break from the screen and looking at something 20 feet away
- ✓ Increase your electronic device’s font size so it can be used at a distance more comfortable for your eyes
- ✓ View screens at moderate brightness, not too bright or too dim
- ✓ Reduce glare to ease reading; this can make a bigger difference than increasing the font
- ✓ Position devices slightly below eye level; this makes it easier for eyes to focus on reading material

Safer Sight On-Site

Many professions – from auto repair to health care – require protective eyewear to help reduce the risk of eye injuries. Yet the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that in approximately 60 percent of eye injury cases, workers failed to wear proper protective eyewear.

“Eye safety – whether at home or in the work place – is proven to prevent vision loss,” said Dr. Slaby. “The two main reasons workers experience eye injuries are either they don’t wear eye protection or they are wearing the wrong kind of protection for the job.”

The WOA and AOA encourage workers to understand the eye safety dangers of their profession, and to wear proper, fitted eye protection at all times. The associations also urge those who work in dangerous environments to be proactive in replacing eyewear that is old or damaged. Both organizations are proud to recognize March as Save Your Vision Month.

For more information about healthy vision on the job, visit www.woa-eyes.org.

About the Wisconsin Optometric Association

The Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA) is a nonprofit affiliation of licensed doctors of optometry and associated businesses dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the vision welfare of the people of Wisconsin. The WOA accomplishes its goals through: education and dissemination of information, organized governmental activity, legislation and regulation, mediation with consumer and public interest groups, and provision of collective benefits to its members. Approximately 650 doctors of optometry are currently members of the WOA located in nearly every county in the state. All members must be licensed to practice optometry by the State of Wisconsin. For more information, visit WOA’s Web site at www.woa-eyes.org.