Eye & Vision Problems

The night has a thousand eyes.
Fortunately, you only have to take care of two.

Your eyes are your window to the world. It doesn’t matter if you’re a green-eyed lady, a brown-eyed girl, or the one-eyed flying purple people eater. You can see clearly now, too, if you consider these eye care tips.

Although vision problems can be uncomfortable and sometimes frightening, most are not serious. In fact, the three common vision problems discussed here—dry eyes, pink eye (conjunctivitis), and styes—are quite common and are usually not cause for alarm.

Signs & Symptoms of Eye Problems

Dry Eyes

In addition to the natural drying of our eyes with age, allergies, smoke, dust, and some medications (sleeping aids, blood pressure pills, etc.) can cause dry eyes. Symptoms include:

- Eyes that feel hot and gritty when blinking
- Eyes that are irritated and slightly red
- Difficulty closing the eyelid

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)

Pink eye is an inflammation of the membrane (conjunctiva) that lines the eyelid and eyeball. Bacteria, viruses, and irritants in the air can cause pink eye. Symptoms include:

- One or both eyes become red and/or itchy
- Sensitivity to light
- Slightly blurred vision
- Eye discharge that may “crust over” as you sleep

Styes

A sty is a non-contagious infection of an eyelash follicle. Normally, styes fill with pus for about a week and then burst. Symptoms include:

- Itchy eyelid
- Red bump on the eye lid

When to Seek Care For Eye Problems

There are some general eye symptoms that require immediate, emergency attention. Seek medical attention in the following situations.

General

- If you experience sudden, partial, or total loss of vision. Seek medical attention immediately in this case—minutes can mean the difference between healthy eyes and vision loss.
- If you experience severely blurred vision and colored halos around bright objects (sign of sudden glaucoma).
- If you notice a veil-like filter covering your field of vision or you see flashes of light appear in one eye (sign of retinal detachment).
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**Dry Eyes**
+ If your condition persists despite self-care treatments.

**Pink Eye**
+ See a doctor if there is pain in the eye(s), blurred vision, or a loss of vision.
+ If you feel like there’s something in your eye.
+ If yellow, green, or bloody discharge accompanies redness of the eye(s).
+ If pupils are different sizes.
+ If pink eye does not respond to self-care or if symptoms last longer than one week.

**Sty**
+ If sty pain is severe or if a sty quickly increases in size.
+ If the sty does not respond to self-care treatment within one week.
+ If the sty seems to be affecting the entire eye or eyeball.

**Treating Eye Problems at Home**

**Dry Eyes**
Try the following strategies to gain relief from dry eyes.
+ Blink your eyes as often as you can.
+ Avoid eye irritants such as smoke or dust.
+ Use over-the-counter eye drops like Allergan or AquaSite to help relieve dry eyes.

**Pink Eye**
If you experience any symptoms of pink eye, contact your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider may test the secretions from your eye to determine whether the cause is viral or bacterial. Viral pink eye will usually clear up on its own, while bacterial pink eye will require an antibiotic eyedrop or ointment.

**Sty**
Use the following self-care tips to treat a sty.
+ Apply a warm compress to the sty four to five times daily for 10 minutes to ease pain.
+ Do not squeeze a sty, or attempt to pop it. If it does burst, let it do so on its own.
+ If the sty bursts, rinse your eye thoroughly.

**A Self-Care Essential**
Picking the right pair of sunglasses: Are darker lenses in sunglasses more protective than lighter lenses? No. Tint has nothing to do with it. What you want to look for is adequate protection against both UVA and UVB light. Look for a sticker on your sunglasses that reads, “Z80.3.” These sunglasses meet various protection standards set by the American National Standards Institute.