

# see.

EYE  
PRO

A seasonal newsletter from your trusted eyecare professional

## What is the difference between an Optometrist, an Optician and an Ophthalmologist

An **optometrist** is a registered health professional with specialist training in eye health and vision care. They conduct eye examinations to check your vision ability and eye health. Your optometrist is your primary eye health provider.

It is extremely important to have your eyes examined regularly. The sooner eye health and vision problems are discovered, the sooner you can be helped. Many serious eye diseases, like cataracts or glaucoma, occur slowly and often without obvious signs or symptoms.

Your optometrist can also provide you with professional advice on your choice of spectacle frames, corrective lenses and/or contact lenses.

Often this advice may also be provided by a dispensing optician. **Dispensing opticians** interpret the written prescriptions to determine the specifications of lenses. They will consider your prescription and occupation, habits and facial features to expertly recommend spectacle frames, lenses, and lens coatings.

An **ophthalmologist** is a medical doctor who specialises in eye surgery and the treatment of eye diseases. Many ophthalmologists specialise in a certain area of eye care (for example, glaucoma, refractive surgery or retinal surgery).

Optometry (Greek: optos meaning seen or visible and metria meaning measurement)

## Do you have Computer Vision Syndrome?

In today's information society, we use our eyes in a near-viewing posture far more than we ever have before. With the advent of computers, our near-viewing situation has become more complicated. We have gone from a horizontal work surface to a vertical work surface. Our screen has its own light, rather than being reflected and we are staring at the screen for many more hours during each day, often without blinking enough.

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) is a collection of eye and vision symptoms related to near-viewing often experienced during computer use.

### What are the symptoms of CVS?

If you, or your child, spends over two hours a day in front of a computer screen, you probably experience some degree of CVS. Symptoms of CVS include:

- Headaches
- Loss of focus
- Burning/tired eyes
- Double/blurred vision
- Neck and shoulder pains

### What causes CVS?

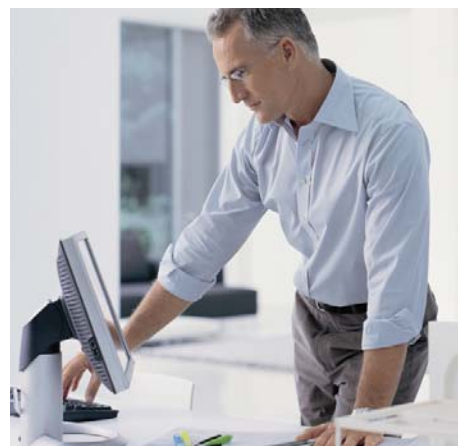
CVS is caused by our eyes and brain reacting differently to onscreen characters than they do to printed characters.

This makes it very difficult for our eyes to maintain focus and remain fixed on them.

This continuous flexing of the eyes' focusing muscles creates fatigue and the burning, tired-eyes feeling that is so common after long hours at the computer.

### What about contact lenses?

Contact lens wearers may find their contacts are fine for seeing the computer screen, but their eyes still get sore and tired. This is because their eyes are



becoming dry, due to blinking less when concentrating on the screen. This can be a problem even if you aren't normally prone to dry eyes. Dry eyes symptoms include burning, itching, intermittent blur or a 'heavy eyes' sensation. Periodic use of lubricant eye drops or artificial tears may be the solution to this problem.

### Ergonomics

Sometimes your aches and pains could also be the result of a poor ergonomic setup. These quick ergonomic tips can help you rearrange your work area so that it is comfortable for you. Your screen should be 50cm to 65cm away and the top of the screen should be just below your eye line. Is the screen covered in dust? Remember to clean your monitor every now and then. And make sure you place your document holder as close to the screen as possible; constantly looking back and forth can tire out your eyes. This is particularly the case if you are wearing progressive lenses.

For further information on the correct set-up of visual display units, please visit [www.osh.govt.nz](http://www.osh.govt.nz) and type VDU into the search field

## Prescription Safety Glasses

Seeing safely in the work place is extremely important. ACC processes thousands of claims for eye injury accidents each year, yet it is estimated that around 90 percent of accidents could be prevented – many simply by donning safety eyewear.



Many work hazards present a risk of serious harm to your eyes. The Health & Safety in Employment Act 1992 requires employers to take all practicable steps to eliminate these hazards, or to isolate the hazard from the employee.

Where this is not possible, employers must provide suitable eye protection for employees and ensure they are used.

Employees have a duty to wear the eye protection while they are exposed to the hazard.

### New safety standard announced

A new Australian/New Zealand safety standard, As/NZs1337.6:2007, was published 17 April 2007 for prescription safety glasses.

This new standard introduces a number of additional requirements and now offers confidence that both frame and lenses, when combined as complete spectacles, work together to provide the required level of protection.

EYEPRO practices can supply all your employees' prescription safety glasses needs. All safety products are supplied with a 'Certificate of Compliance' stating the level of protection and standards complied with by that item. Plus all products are covered by a \$20 million product liability insurance policy.

EYEPRO practices also have the largest range of safety frames in New Zealand that comply with the new standard, and gone are the days when they were all ugly! Visit your local EYEPRO practice to view the range.

## Win a pair of Levi's sunglasses!

Win a pair of Levi's sunglasses!

We're inviting all our readers to enter our easy competition that we'll publish in each issue of SEE.

Just answer a simple question relating to something you've read in that issue, email your answer to [see@eyepro.co.nz](mailto:see@eyepro.co.nz) and we'll put you in the draw to win one of six pairs of Levi's sunglasses.

The sunglasses are the latest design from Levi's and are valued at \$149 (rrp) each.

The question for this issue's competition is:

**How regularly should you get your eyes checked?**

Email your answer to [see@eyepro.co.nz](mailto:see@eyepro.co.nz) by 30 September 2007 with your name, address and telephone number.

Good luck.



## Should I purchase corrective lenses over the counter?



With a variety of outlets now selling inexpensive 'hobby' or reading glasses, many people wonder whether it's worth visiting an optometrist.

The theory is that because hobby glasses

are often available in chemists (in fact they can be sold by anyone) they are probably OK. Especially if you feel your eyes aren't too bad.

But just as you'd call in an IT specialist, rather than tackle your problematic computer system with a screwdriver, so, too, should you consult a qualified professional about your eyes.

Eyecare professionals recommend having your eyes examined at least every two years, both to check your visual performance and to examine the health of your eyes.

While you can probably tell if your sight is changing, you may not pick up any healthcare issues. Many conditions, such as glaucoma or UV damage, are more

common as we get older and do not present any symptoms - until possible visual loss has occurred.

Another issue is that hobby glasses have a maximum prescription of only +4 Dioptres (a focal distance of 1/2 metre) and may not be strong enough for most people. Using incorrect lenses can cause additional eyesight problems.

Also, their right and left lenses are identical which again is unsuitable for most people, whose right and left eye, like their feet, are usually slightly different from each other.

The bottom line? Invest in a visit to your local EYEPRO optometrist. You only get one pair of eyes so please take care of them.

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