



The Maryland State Medical Society

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MARCH IS WORKPLACE EYE WELLNESS MONTH

BALTIMORE, March 21, 2017 - March is Workplace Eye Health and Safety Month. Each day, over 2,000 Americans suffer an eye injury. This means that almost one million Americans have experienced some vision loss due to eye injury, which has resulted in more than \$300 million in lost work time, medical expenses and workman's compensation.

Many people think of work-related eye injuries as being isolated to outdoor jobs such as construction work, landscaping or animal handling, but working in an office can be just as hazardous to your eyesight. The most common eye problem is computer vision syndrome. While consistently being on your computer will not permanently damage your vision, it can make your eyes feel irritated and fatigued.

Computer vision syndrome is not just a myth. Too much screen time and not enough breaks can cause headaches, inattentiveness, neck pain, back strain, and dry eye. Studies show that staring at a screen for extended periods of time lengthens the interval between blinks, preventing eyes from staying lubricated and moistened (Source: Eye Med).

There are some ways to prevent computer vision syndrome and keep your eyes feeling comfortable:

- **Reposition your screen.** Adjust your screen to be at a right angle away from any direct light source. Invest in an anti-glare screen for your monitor to make computer work gentler on your eyes.
- **Remember the 20-20-20 rule.** This rule reminds you that every 20 minutes, you should look at an object at least 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.
- **Don't forget to blink.** While it may sound ridiculous, write yourself a note and place it on your monitor. Write "Blink Often" or any other message that will remind you to regularly close your eyes to keep them from getting dried out.
- **Use artificial tears.** Over-the-counter eye drops can be extremely helpful in preventing dry eye and keeping your eyes comfortable.
- **Drink water.** Adequate hydration can make a big difference, especially during the winter months when heaters and furnaces can make the air particularly dry.
- **Schedule regular comprehensive eye exams.** Nothing can replace the importance of having an eye exam by a licensed ophthalmologist at regular intervals. If you have any concerns about your vision or experience any changes with your eyesight, do not delay in making an appointment.

"This year, MedChi challenges you to prioritize not only your eye health, but your overall health and well-being, and limit your exposure to blue light," said MedChi President, Dr. Stephen Rockower. "It's as easy as looking away from your screen every 20 minutes and powering down an hour before bed."

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.