Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How does the eye work?

A. When you take a picture, the lens in the front of the camera allows light through and focuses that light on the film that covers the back inside wall of the camera. When the light hits the film, a picture is taken. The eye works in much the same way. The front parts of the eye (the cornea, pupil and lens) are clear and allow light to pass through. The light also passes through the large space in the centre of the eye called the vitreous cavity. The vitreous cavity is filled with a clear, jelly-like substance called the vitreous or vitreous gel. The light is focused by the cornea and the lens onto a thin layer of tissue called the retina, which covers the back inside wall of the eye. The retina is like the film in a camera. It is the seeing tissue of the eye. When the focused light hits the retina, a picture is taken. Messages about this picture are sent to the brain through the optic nerve. This is how we see.

Q. What should I do if I run out of drops?

A. You should make every effort to administer your drops as prescribed by your clinician. Try to avoid running out of eye drops before you have finished the course by either requesting more at your clinic appointment, or contacting your GP for a repeat prescription.

Q. Does working at a computer hurt my eyes?

A. No, there is no evidence that working at a computer damages the eyes. However, long hours of work and focusing on the screen can cause you to blink less, be fatiguing to the eyes, neck and back. Monitor glare from various light sources can also be a problem. It is often helpful to take periodic breaks, looking off in the distance and adjusting your work station (angle of the monitor, height of the chair, changing the lighting, etc.). If you suffer dry eye as a result of reduced blinking, artificial tears may be useful.

Q. Why does my eye twitch?

A. Mild twitching of the eyelid is a common phenomenon. Although these involuntary contractions of muscles are annoying, they are almost always temporary and completely harmless. The medical name for this kind of twitching is ocular myokymia. It is quite common and most often associated with fatigue. When your eye is twitching, it is not visible to anyone else. Ophthalmologists often are asked what causes the twitching and what can be done to stop it. Lack of sleep, too much caffeine or increased stress seems to be root causes. Often, gently massaging your eye will relieve the symptoms. Usually, the twitch will disappear after catching up on your sleep.

Q. Will sitting too close to the television set hurt my child's eyes?

A. No, there is no scientific evidence that TV sets emit rays that are harmful to the eyes.

Q. Is it better to leave my glasses off as much as possible to try to strengthen my eyes?

A. No, leaving your glasses off does not ‘strengthen’ your eyes in any way. If you have glasses, they have been prescribed for a reason – you need them. You will be able to see better when wearing them, and your eyes will be less inclined to tire quickly.

Q. Are sunglasses good for my eyes?

A. There is a benefit to wearing UV protective lenses, wearing them may protect against cataract formation. Clear lenses with UV protection may offer greater protection than dark lenses because they allow the eyes to be exposed to more light. This causes greater constriction of the pupil which lets less light enter the eyes.

Q. How often do I need to get my prescription changed?

A. There is no predetermined schedule for changing glasses or contacts. It is necessary to change your prescription only when it no longer provides adequate correction. However, it is still a good idea to have regular eye examinations.

Q. Will reading in dim light hurt my eyes?

A. No, but for most people it is more comfortable reading with proper lighting which is bright enough to provide good illumination but not so bright as to cause glare.

Q. Can eyes be transplanted?

A. No. Currently, there is no way to transplant a whole eye. However, corneas have been successfully transplanted for many years.

Q. Are eyes taken out during surgery?
A. Absolutely not! There is no surgical procedure that requires the whole eye to be removed from its socket. Most surgery is carried out through the pupil which is the natural aperture of the eye.