



E-Bulletin



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The E - Bulletin is a service provided from the in-house team of physicians (Specialists, GP's & the CEDARS Training Center) at the **CEDARS – Jebel Ali International Hospital** in order to raise awareness about health issues.

Kid's Eye Care

The kid's eye care starts even before the child is born at the time of pregnancy. If the mother contracts viral infections like rubella in 2nd trimester, the child may be born with cataract and if she contracts toxoplasmosis in 3rd trimester, the child may be born with blinding disease at birth.

The child may be born with metabolic disorders like diabetes, galactosemia and Wilson's disease and have eye complications that affect vision. The metabolic disorders in the mother and ingestion of certain drugs like corticosteroids do produce eye diseases in the newborn and thus should be avoided.

The kids' eye care involves an active participation of parents, teachers and medical professionals. Parents should be educated about how to look after the eyes and when to seek professional eye care.



Periodic Eye Check Ups

The vision should be measured in each eye no later than 3 years of age in as much squint (deviation of eyes) or a lazy eye maybe corrected if detected at this stage. If the lazy eye is detected after the age of 9 years, it cannot be corrected and the vision in that eye will never improve by any means and this must be emphasized to all parents. Any child who has an eye that consistently crosses after 6 months of age requires specialized eye examination at an early age. 90 percent of vision in a child's eye develops by the age of 2 ½ years and by 3 years most of the vision is developed.

It is desirable to measure vision of children before the age of 5 years to recognize the presence of severe refractive errors. If the defective vision is found the child should be advised to wear glasses and follow up examination should be done routinely every 6 months to one year and glasses changed accordingly until 22 years because the eyes do not grow after this age and the power of glasses does not change usually. The alternative to glasses during the developing age of child is contact lenses, which if used wisely during the age of 12 – 16 years can help control the refractive power of the eyes to some extent.



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Role of Eye Trauma

The children are more prone to eye injuries than adults in general. The eye injuries in children with sharp toys or pencils, etc. are well documented. The child may end up losing vision if immediate care is not provided because of haemorrhage in the eye or puncture wound of the eyes caused by sharp toys. The most delicate age for these kinds of eye injuries is 2-4 years but some cases have also been reported in the school-going children. In fact the blunt trauma like tennis ball injury or cricket ball injuries are more common in the later age group that need urgent attention by the eye doctor. Besides, these injuries one should also remember the Battered Child Syndrome that includes a non-accidental trauma as well as other problems resulting from lack of reasonable care and protection of children by their parents, guardians or other caretakers. The eye injuries in this category include cigarette burns, of the eyelids, sudden haemorrhage in the eye, chemical burns of eyes and dislocated lens and subdural haematoma.



Role of Light

The proper light is an essential requirement for a good vision. It plays a vital role in the photochemical reaction at a biochemical level in the retina. The quality of vision suffers in dim light and the children who persistently read and work in insufficient light end up having eye strain, headaches and probably increase in their eye powers. It is also important especially in infants that they should not spend days and night under the bright room lights of nursery. It is advisable to protect them from lights periodically to permit visual cells renewal in their eyes. The injuries caused by ultraviolet radiation may have accumulative effect on children's eyes and is more common in extreme sunlight especially at the beaches. For the same reason solar eclipses should be avoided to protect the eyes from the blinding effects of infrared rays focused on the retina causing visual damage.



Role of TV and Computers

There is a lot of evidence from the studies in the west that excessive use of computers or video games not only cause a 'computer eye syndrome' causing frequent eye strain, headaches and increase in power of their glasses but in later years may show other harmful effects on the body. One should also protect the children from the emission of ultraviolet and other harmful rays from computers and television sets. The children should not be allowed to glue to the TVs and computers and a reasonable amount of safe distances of 3 meters for TV and 60-80 cms for computers should be maintained. Besides this a time limit should be adhered to minimize the exposure depending on the age of the child. Though there are no conclusive studies that watching excessive amount of TV causes increase in visual defect in eyes but there is ample evidence in daily practice here that it does happen in growing children here.



Eye Facts: Your eyes blinks over 27,397 times in a days. | Blinking helps to wash tears over our eyeballs. That keeps them clean and moist. | A blink of an eye lasts about one tenth of a second. | You can't sneeze with your eyes open. | Everyone is colour blind at birth

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Role of Nutrition



Diet plays a very important role in maintaining healthy eyes. In this part of the world one should not only look for deficiency of certain vitamins because of food faddism but should also look for food excess like obesity and other related disorders in children. Vitamin A (retinol) is very vital to maintain good vision since it is an essential element for visual excitation in visual cells (Rods) and its deficiency in diet may cause night blindness or impaired dark adaptation. It can be corrected by 150 ug of Vitamin A or 300 ug of beta-carotene daily or alternatively by providing 30,000 i.u Units of vitamin daily for a week. Lots of parents are overenthusiastic in correcting their children's eyes by giving plenty of carrot juice daily presuming that eyes will become stronger and hoping that child may not need glasses later on. In doing this, they may do more harm since excess of vitamin A gets deposited in liver and spleen and cause a lot of damage in kids. As a matter of fact one should go for a balanced diet containing green leafy vegetables, fresh fruits, pulses, egg, fish and milk in routine and carrot juice if advised 3 times a week.

Tips for Parents



- Examine your child's eyes between 3 – 5 years of age.
- Avoid dim or excessive light exposure.
- Limit your child's computer and TV watching.
- Check your child's glasses regularly at 6-12 months interval.
- Do not believe in shortcuts, always get your child's eyes checked by an Eye Specialist if your child is below 12 years of age.
- Avoid frequent visits to beaches and viewing eclipses without proper eye protection.
- Healthy eyes do not require annual examination.
- If there is persistent watering or frequent blinking in your child's eyes, consult eye professional.
- If your child squeezes eyes while watching TV, he may need glasses.
- If your child does not copy correctly from the blackboard, consult your eye specialist, as he may need glasses.
- If child's performance is consistently poor in class, consult your eye profession as he may have learning disabilities or defective eye power.
- The eyes clean themselves. Healthy eyes do not require eye drops.
- Chemicals in the eye must be diluted with water immediately.
- In case of even trivial eye injury, report to your eye professional immediately. ❖

Medical Consultant for April 2014



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