



# Eye on Health

## Five Steps To Protecting Your Child's Vision

(NAPSA)—Did you know that 80 percent of what we learn comes through our eyes? Good eyesight is essential for a child's development, and poor vision can lead to a variety of serious problems—from learning disabilities to behavior issues.

Your eyes are the windows to our fascinating world, so it is critical to take care of them during every stage of life. Studies show, however, that few parents realize professional recommendations call for a child's first eye exam at the age of six months, with complete exams at ages 3, 5 and every two years thereafter.

### Eye Exams

Children should receive an eye exam by an eye doctor who can detect vision problems and underlying eye-related health concerns. Vision Service Plan (VSP) offers a nationwide network of highly trained eye doctors who are skilled at working with the youngest of patients. To find a doctor near you, visit [www.vsp.com](http://www.vsp.com).

Between appointments, here are tips to help protect your child's eyes:

### Playing Safe

Children often wear protective pads when playing sports, but little emphasis is placed on protecting the eyes. Children are especially at risk for sports-related injuries—in fact, more than 41 percent of all such injuries take place among athletes younger than 15. To avoid eye injuries, athletes should wear protective polycarbonate eyeglasses with a one-piece frame.

### Food for the Eyes

Certain foods help keep eyes in their prime, so load up on fruits and vegetables, which have lots of vitamins. Whole grains are rich in vitamins and minerals. Omega-3 fats in fish and zinc in meats, seafood, milk and other dairy



**Regular eye exams help you keep an eye on your child's vision.**

products are all believed to be nourishing for the eyes.

### Sunscreen for the Eyes

Sunglasses do more than just make you look cool. They provide vital protection year-round, shielding the eyes from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. When shopping for a pair of shades, select glasses with shatterproof lenses that carry a UV protection sticker. Also, make sure the eyewear extends out to the sides to block peripheral UV rays.

### Monitor Computer Eyestrain

There's little doubt computers are second nature to children and teenagers, but excessive use can lead to computer vision syndrome (CVS), which causes blurred vision and sore, dry eyes.

To help prevent CVS, VSP recommends that parents limit their child's time on the computer to 30 minutes per day for children under 10 and no more than two hours per day for children ages 10 to 15, use an antiglare filter, and position the computer screen 24 inches from the child's face and at an angle, so the youngster is looking down slightly.

By following these five easy steps, starting with regular eye exams, you will provide your child with healthy eyes for life. To learn more about protecting your child's vision, visit the VSP Web site at [www.vsp.com](http://www.vsp.com).