



October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014

## Keep Your Eyes Healthy!

Eyes are very special sensory organs – imagine your life without them. A significant cause of eye damage is wearing contact lenses, but the issue usually isn't the lenses themselves; rather it's the way people use – or misuse – them! It's estimated 80 percent of wearers don't follow manufacturer recommendations. The most common issue? Diluting or re-using solutions. The risks? They range from simple eye infections to serious ones... that could result in blindness!

### Computer Use Slows Production of Tears

Many people notice increased eye fatigue and dryness with extended time on the computer. Much of this can be related to minimal eye movement and incomplete blinking. A Japanese study investigated the production of a specific tear component with computer use and found that it was significantly reduced with long bouts of computer usage (greater than 7 hours). Drops are being developed to manage the production of this component.

### Another Reason Not to Smoke

The evidence continues to pile up – smoking adversely affects health in a variety of ways. Now, there's further evidence of smoking increasing the risk of cataracts, opacities that form in the lens of the eyes, causing blurriness and loss of vision. A study out of Sweden found that more smoking results in more cataracts and that, while quitting slowed cataract development, the risk only dropped very slowly. Take home message? Don't start smoking!

### Eye Colour and Pain?

Does your eye colour predict your response to pain? An interesting little study out of the University of Pittsburgh's Magee Women's Hospital says... yes! They found that women with darker eyes (brown, hazel) experienced more pain, anxiety, and sleep disturbance than those with lighter eye colour (blue, green). They believe this is a gene-linked trait and it corresponds to others discovered, such as hair colour, gender and age.

Many eye problems can be solved with over the counter remedies, but seek advice from your pharmacist first. They'll steer you to the right product – or your eye doctor. Don't take your eyes for granted.