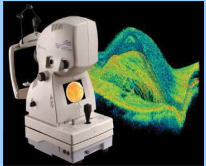


JANESMELLIE OPTICIANS

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CHILDS PLAY



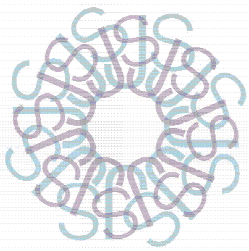
At this time of year, people tend to spend a fair amount of time outdoors, enjoying the warmer weather and longer days. However, as the sun becomes a more common sight, it brings some attendant risks, particularly for children who virtually live outside in summer.

The sun emits high levels of ultraviolet light, more commonly referred to as UV. This electromagnetic radiation has some similarities to X-rays, and so comes with the risks that can be harmful to the body; such as causing sunburn on the skin. UV is potentially very dangerous to the human eye, and appropriate protection is crucial as children's eyes develop and mature. Too much ultraviolet light over a long period of time can damage key components like corneas and retinas, as well as potentially inciting conditions like cataracts or eyelid cancer in later life.

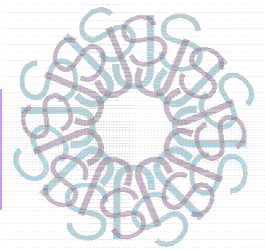
The most common UV-prevention method involves protective lenses in sunglasses or spectacles. However, there are other things parents can do to protect their offspring from the risks of ultraviolet light, starting with the provision of brimmed hats or visors-the latter are surprisingly popular with children. Sun cream is vital for youngsters spending time outdoors on a hot day, particularly during sporting activities and it should be applied to eyelids and eyebrows

UV levels vary constantly, but when the sun is highest in the sky, there are far more harmful rays. Looking directly towards the sun is dangerous and can result in permanent damage, the sun literally 'burning' the back of the eye. Cloudy days can be misleading as cloud cover does not offer a barrier to UV, the damaging rays still filtering through. Common sense is a parent's best weapon, and it almost goes without saying that children should never be allowed to use sun beds or facial solariums.





DIA'S WARNINGS



Diabetes is a surprisingly common condition, affecting an estimated three million people in the U.K, and around three per cent of the world's population. It occurs when the body is unable to regulate its blood sugar levels, failing to transfer glucose into cells where it is normally broken down to release energy. The hormone that regulates this process is called insulin, and if it is either absent or ineffective, numerous health problems can be caused, including some that affect the eyes.



Often incited by a combination of factors, diabetes can be hereditary or triggered by obesity, while some peoples immune systems wrongly identify insulin as a danger, before attacking the cells that manufacture it. Type 1 diabetes involves a total absence of insulin; in the far more common and manageable type 2 form, there are insufficient quantities of insulin to maintain healthy blood glucose levels.

Although there is no known cure for diabetes, it is possible to manage the condition and maintain a normal lifestyle. However, diagnosis is a crucial first step— many people have it without even realising.

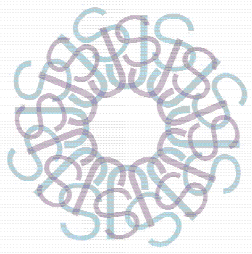
One common symptom of diabetes is intermittently blurred vision, caused by fluctuating blood sugar levels, while other telltale signs include excessive thirst, fatigue and weight loss. Making a diagnosis is a fairly straightforward process, typically involving a blood or urine test. Once the presence of diabetes is confirmed, regular treatment is essential to prevent illness or secondary health problems, such as retinopathy.



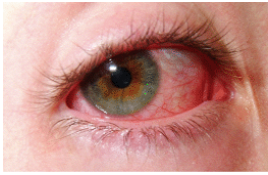
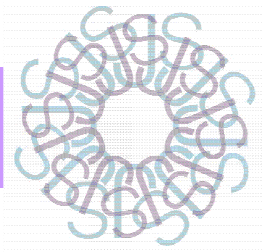
This is a condition where the blood vessels in the eyes are damaged by high glucose levels, and it can eventually lead to blindness if untreated. While the majority of diabetes sufferers will eventually develop some form of retinopathy , a number of treatments are available to slow , stop or possibly even reverse the damage caused to the retinas. Diabetics are also at higher risk of developing cataracts or glaucoma earlier in life.

Trained optometrists are qualified to judge the overall health of your eyes. Annual retinal screening is essential for diabetics, so that the onset of any eye-related conditions can be immediately identified and treated. Indeed, in many ways, managing diabetes is simply a matter of healthy living and common sense— exercise and a healthy diet are just as important as following prescribed programmes of oral tablets or insulin injections, or monitoring your glucose levels by self-testing. Smoking is very detrimental , and high blood pressure should also be brought under control as soon as possible, by reducing alcohol and salt intake. Cases of childhood diabetes have trebled in the last three decades, and eye examinations for children are every bit as vital as regular exercise.





EXAM QUESTIONS



Having an eye examination is the cornerstone of maintaining good vision. People might notice if their eyes become bloodshot or unusually dry, but for the most part, the ability to see clearly is taken for granted. Yet the eye is among the most complicated organs in the human body, and regular inspections by experts will help to keep these precision instruments working efficiently and comfortably.

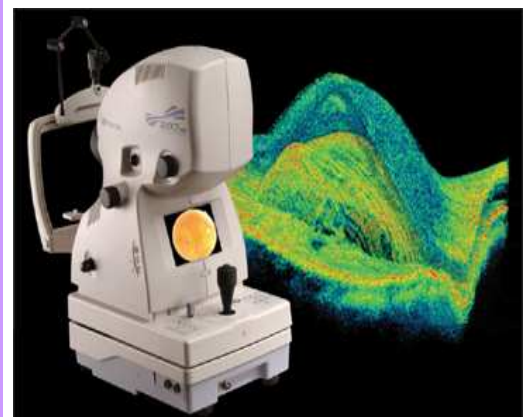
The iris and pupil are merely the public face of a spherical organ with around 30 separate components, each performing a vital role in allowing people to see. Investigating the condition of inner parts like the lens or retina requires specialist equipment, such as the intense white torch known as an ophthalmoscope. However, it also demands in-depth knowledge, and thanks to their extensive training the opticians at Jane Smellie's can often identify a number of potential dangers or future problems at a very early stage.

One example of this is the onset of glaucoma—a painless condition that can take years to fully manifest. The latest equipment in expert hands means earlier detection, allowing appropriate treatment to begin before the condition becomes too serious.

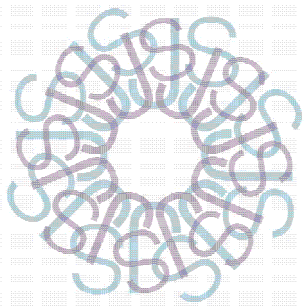
Children and toddlers should also be given regular eye examinations, albeit for slightly different reasons to adults.

Various functions will be analysed, from near and distance vision through to movement and focusing skills, as well as an assessment of how well the child's eyes work together—a process called binocularity. Children's eyes develop far quicker than adults, but for any age group, there is a common misconception that if your eyes are pronounced health today, they will remain so for a long time. However, changes in visual performance can be considerable from year to year.

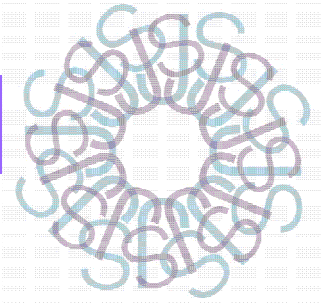
Vision correction products are often less effective over time, as their prescription becomes increasingly inappropriate. As well as identifying such a problem, a routine eye inspection presents as an ideal opportunity to acquire up-to-date prescription strengths. The strain of trying to focus on blurred objects can cause health problems such as headaches, so regular check-ups are vital to ensure that spectacles, sunglasses and contact lenses are performing to their full potential.



Jane Smellie Opticians is also a hotbed of sophisticated technology. Those complex machines may look otherworldly, but they all perform vital functions, and some can even help to identify wider health issues such as diabetes or high blood pressure. As for the ubiquitous wall chart, it's circles and letters aren't merely useful for gauging prescription strength - they help detect differences between each eye and much more besides. The phoropter that you view the chart through allows your optometrist to easily add and remove different lenses, quickly discerning your exact prescription requirements.



LIGHT AND SHADE



Sunglasses provide a fine example of the power of celebrity endorsements. Actors and actresses were among the first people to regularly wear tinted lenses, although opinions differ as to their initial impetus. Some claim it was because of the powerful studio lights used at the time, while others suggest anonymity was the motivating factor. Whatever the reason, sunglasses have subsequently become a must-have fashion accessory, managing the rare achievement of being stylish and practical in equal measures.



Today, sunglasses are often bought primarily for aesthetic purposes, yet their health benefits are considerably more valuable. A good pair will filter out ultraviolet light all year round, allowing the eyes to work more efficiently and protecting them from damage. UV radiation is directly linked to a number of conditions including photokeratitis (sunburnt corneas), cataracts and even cancer, so it might be assumed that every pair of sunglasses will protect your eyes from these invisible dangers. However, some pairs can actually be harmful—cosmetic lenses without UV protection, simply encourage the pupils widen, thereby exposing more of the eyes to damage. UV resistance must be incorporated into the lenses, typically featuring 99 to 100 percent protection, and this will be clearly indicated when the sunglasses are for sale.

Another crucial component of choosing sunglasses is ensuring that the eyes are fully shielded. Small frames perched on the end of your nose won't provide much cover, so make sure it isn't possible to see over or around the lenses. As a general rule, wraparound or larger designs are optimal, and always ascertain there aren't big gaps between the frame sides and your temples.

Sports enthusiasts have a huge range of options to consider, from shatterproof sports lenses in flexible frames through to cheek-hugging surfing goggles. However, most people will choose sunglasses primarily for light activities, and that means the two main priorities are aesthetics and the quality of the UV filtration. Acceptable levels of protection vary around the world, but Britain's UV400 standard (named after a frequency of radiation) is more stringent than Europe's CE certification. Since children's eyes are particularly susceptible to damage, it is imperative that they aren't give coloured toy lenses; sunglasses with full UV protection incorporated into each lens will help to prevent eye-related problems later in life.

With a broad spectrum of prescription strengths available nowadays, sunglasses are so much more versatile than they were in the early years of Hollywood. Polarised lenses can reduce glare from reflective surfaces—ideal for reducing glare from low winter sun for instance, and scratchproof lenses are ideal for keeping your sunglasses in optimal condition, delivering maximum UV protection.

Visit the Jane Smellie team for more information and advice.

