



# Digital Eye Strain

The time we spend on computers, tablets, phones and watching television is growing as our day-to-day life has become increasingly digitized. Digital eye strain is caused by a number of factors, including staring at close-up objects for extended periods of time.

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Alberta  
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## SYMPTOMS

- headaches
- eye strain
- blurred vision
- eye irritation
- double vision
- excessive tearing or dry eyes
- stinging or burning eyes
- excessive blinking

## PREVENTION

To reduce the risk of digital eye strain:

- Position your screen about an arm's length from your eyes and 20 degrees below eye level.
- Keep your room lighting at the same brightness as your computer screen. Don't stare at the monitor in a dark room.
- Minimize reflected glare on your screen by using dimmer switches on lights and protective anti-reflection coatings on glasses.
- Give your eyes a mini break. Every 20 minutes take a 20-second break and focus your eyes on something at least 20 feet away.
- Blink fully. People tend to blink less than half as often during computer use and some don't completely close their eyes when blinking, which can result in dry eyes. Use of appropriate eye drops prescribed by your optometrist may relieve discomfort.

While these are general recommendations, everyone's visual system, visual demands and ergonomic environment is different.

## TREATMENT

Based on the patient's digital device habits, an optometrist can recommend a customized solution to help prevent the adverse effects of digital eye strain.

Your optometrist may recommend computer glasses, which can help reduce eye fatigue.

People may be experiencing symptoms, but may not realize the problems are being caused by digital eye strain.

Regular visits to an optometrist will ensure these symptoms are being detected early and simple changes are made to alleviate the discomfort. During a comprehensive eye exam, an optometrist can determine if the symptoms are a result of digital eye strain or a more serious eye health concern.

Optometrists complete a Bachelor of Science degree or higher, followed by a four year Doctor of Optometry degree from an accredited university. They are a primary source for all your vision, eye health and eyewear needs. If you do not currently have an optometrist, visit our website at [www.optometrists.ab.ca](http://www.optometrists.ab.ca) and click on *Find an Optometrist*. This will provide a list of optometrists in your area.

**For information about many other common eye-related conditions, visit our website's Eye Health Library.**  
**[optometrists.ab.ca/eyehealthlibrary](http://optometrists.ab.ca/eyehealthlibrary)**