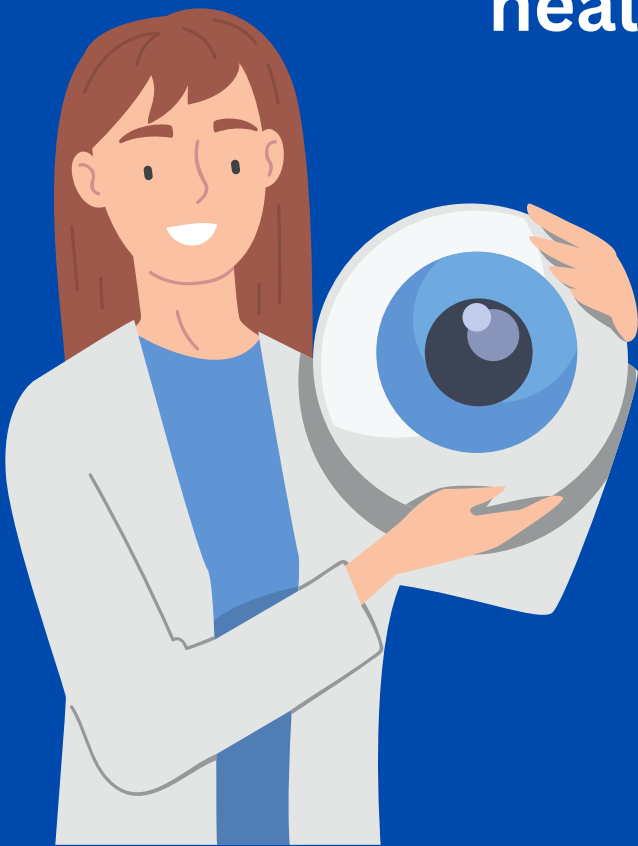
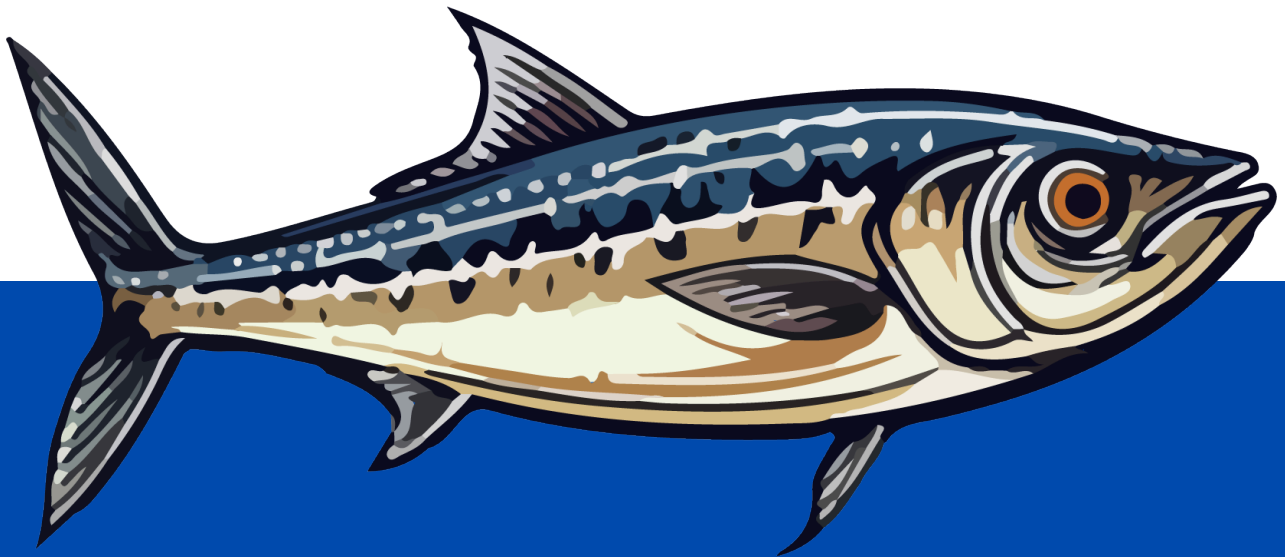


# 10 Steps to Eye Health

**Making subtle changes to your lifestyle can help improve your eye health and minimise your risk of developing common eye conditions in older age, such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and cataracts. To help you keep your eyes in peak condition, follow this ten-step guide to healthy eyes.**





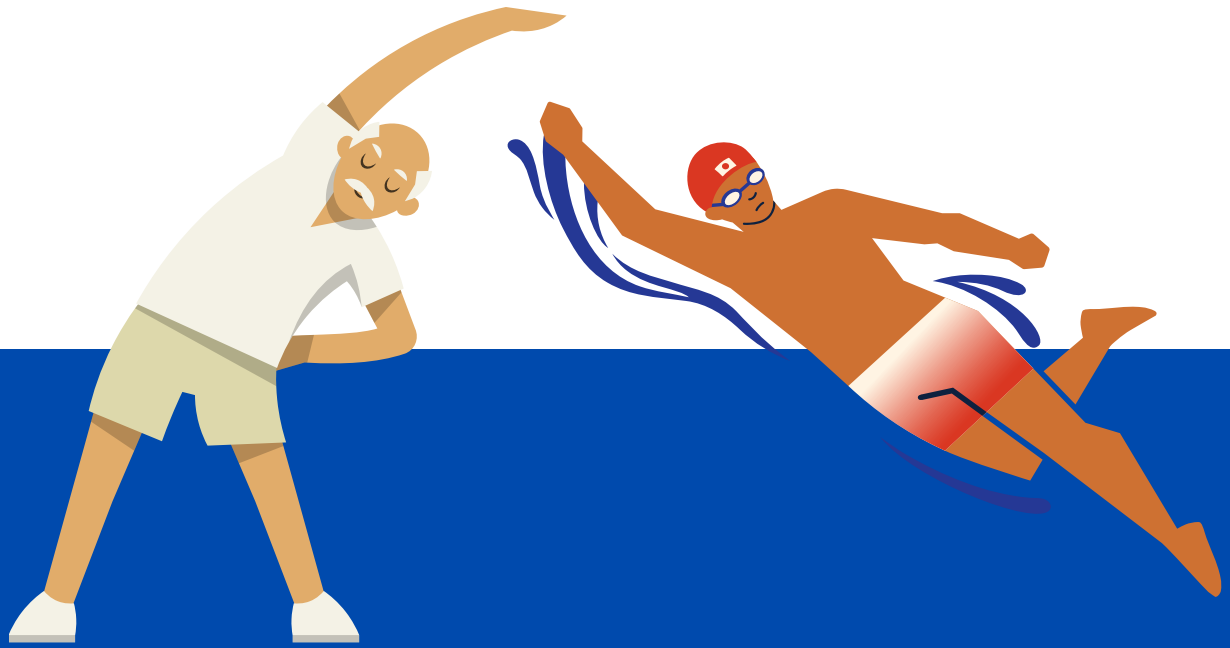
# Step One

## Eat Right for Good Sight

Eating a healthy balanced diet can reduce your risk of developing common eye conditions. Eye friendly nutrients found in many fruits and vegetables including spinach, red peppers, kale, leeks, avocado, peaches, and blueberries can help to protect against AMD – a condition that impairs the vision of more than 600,000 people in the UK and is the leading cause of blindness in the western world.

Cold water fish such as sardines, mackerel and tuna are all excellent sources of DHA and Omega-3 fatty acids, which provide structural support to cell membranes in the eye and are beneficial for dry eye and prevention of macular degeneration and general sight preservation.

Recent research has shown how eating fish just once a week can reduce your risk of developing early AMD by up to 40 percent.



# Step Two

## Exercise Regularly

The eyes need oxygen to stay healthy and comfortable. Scientific evidence suggests that aerobic exercise can increase crucial oxygen supplies to the optic nerve and lower pressure in the eye.

Reducing intraocular 'eye' pressure can help control conditions such as glaucoma and ocular hypertension. Aerobic exercise can support overall health benefits for people with diabetes, reducing the risks associated with developing diabetic retinopathy.

To gain any health benefit from exercise the Department of Health recommends doing 30 minutes exercise five days a week. Brisk walks, aerobic exercise and swimming are all excellent ways to reduce intraocular pressure.

Remember to consult your GP before commencing any new exercise programme.

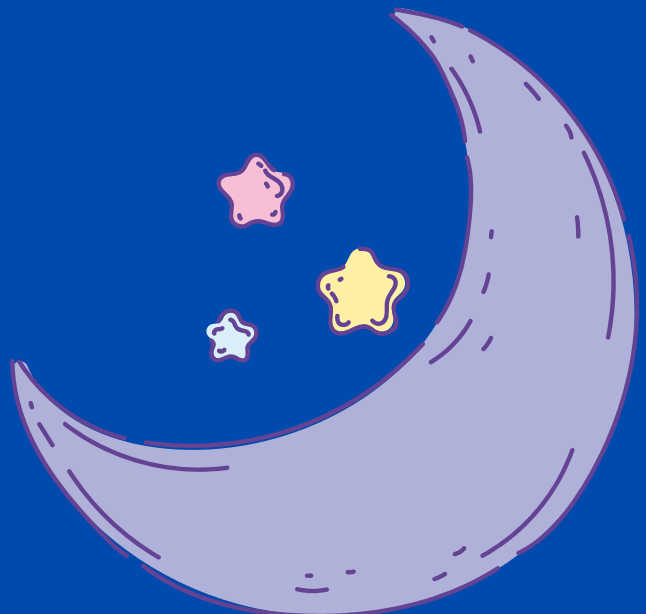
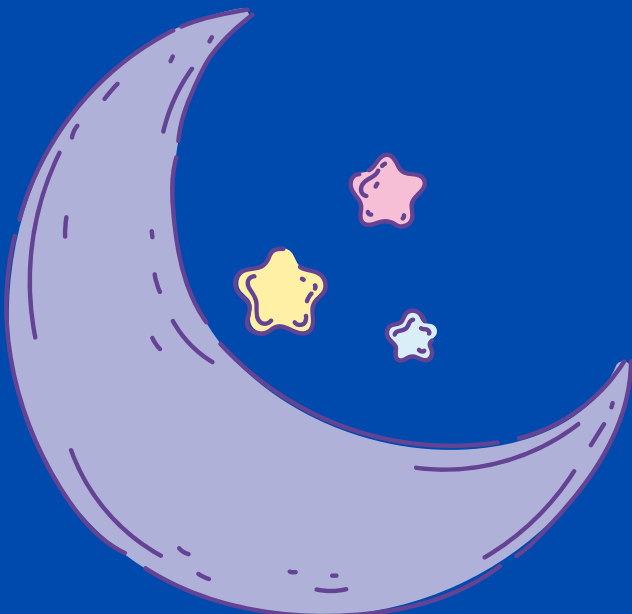


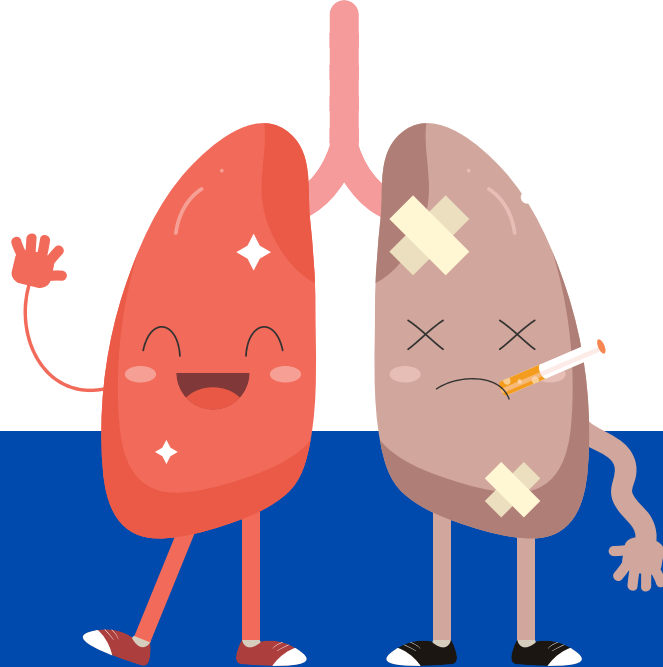
# Step Three

## Get a Good Night's Sleep

A good night's sleep can help keep your eyes feeling bright and refreshed. Lack of sleep and fatigue can lead to your eyes becoming sore, irritated, puffy, red and bloodshot.

A quick fix for relieving your eyes from any discomfort caused by lack of sleep is to place a cold compress – wet tea bags, slices of cucumber or a cold wet facecloth – over your eyes then lie back and relax for ten minutes.





# Step Four

## Don't Smoke

Smokers have a significantly higher risk of eye disease than non-smokers. According to research published by the RNIB smokers are twice as likely to lose their sight in later life than non-smokers.

Tobacco chemicals damage the blood vessels behind your eyes and increase your risk of developing AMD. However, the good news is that if you quit smoking your risk of developing AMD begins to decline.

Smoking is also associated with other eye diseases including cataracts.



# Step Five

## Wear Goggles

According to the British Safety Council, nearly 250,000 of us will injure our eyes this year, with almost 50% injuries occurring as a result of accidents in the home.

Is it common? A staggering 20,000 eye accidents per year – one every 25 minutes! – are as a direct result of DIY.

Whilst sport is now the biggest cause of hospital admission for serious eye injuries in the UK (one in three squash players will suffer some form of eye injury), believe it or not, the most common skiing injury is not to legs or arms – but to eyes! It's not flailing ski poles that pose the threat either, but high levels of ultra-violet (UV) light that can enter and burn your eyes, even on cloudy days. UV levels are highest when the atmosphere is very clear – such as on the ski slopes and the problem is made worse by snow which reflects light.

Using goggles to protect your eyes when you're in a situation that poses a risk to your eyes can help prevent injury and keep your eyes healthy.

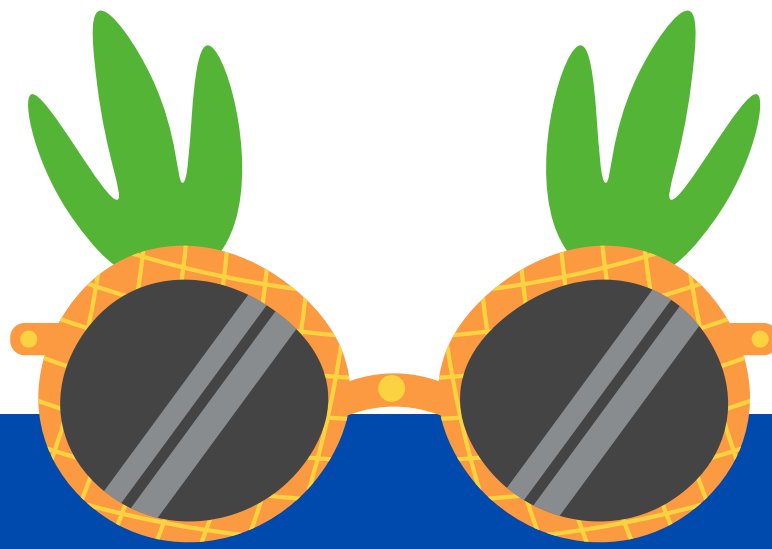


# Step Six

## Limit Your Alcohol Intake

Drinking too much alcohol interferes with your liver functions and reduces the levels of glutathione, an efficient antioxidant that can help protect against common eye disease.

The Department of Health advises that men should not drink more than three to four units of alcohol per day, and women should drink no more than two to three units of alcohol per day.



# Step Seven

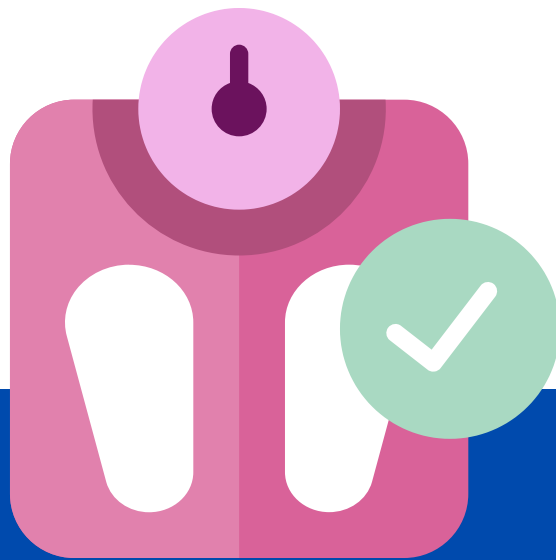
## Protect Your Eyes

Excessive exposure to the sun's UV rays can lead to a sunburn-like condition called photokeratitis. This can be extremely painful and make your eyes red, swollen and watery. The symptoms of photokeratitis, an inflammation of the outer layer of the cornea, typically occur after 6 – 12 hours exposure and will normally clear up quickly causing no permanent damage to the eye.

However, the damaging effects of UV are cumulative and over a long period your risk of developing cataracts and other age-related conditions increases significantly. By the age of 18 more than half a lifetime's worth of UV light will have been absorbed by a child's eyes, so it's never too early to start protecting your eyes.

Ensure that your sunglasses filter at least 99% of UVA and UVB light and look out for the CE or BS EN 1836:1997 marks when choosing your sunglasses.





# Step Eight

## Maintain a Healthy Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight helps to preserve macular pigment density which, in turn, helps to protect the retina against the breakdown of cells and the onset of AMD.

Damage to blood vessels in the eye caused by excess body weight has been linked to glaucoma and diabetes.

BMI is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to both adult men and women.

How does it work? To calculate your BMI yourself, follow these three steps:

1. Work out your height in metres and multiply the figure by itself.
2. Measure your weight in kilograms.
3. Divide your weight by your height squared.

### **BMI Results**

You are considered underweight if your BMI is  $\leq 18.5$ .

You are considered normal weight if your BMI is 18.5-24.9.

You are considered overweight if your BMI is 25-29.9.

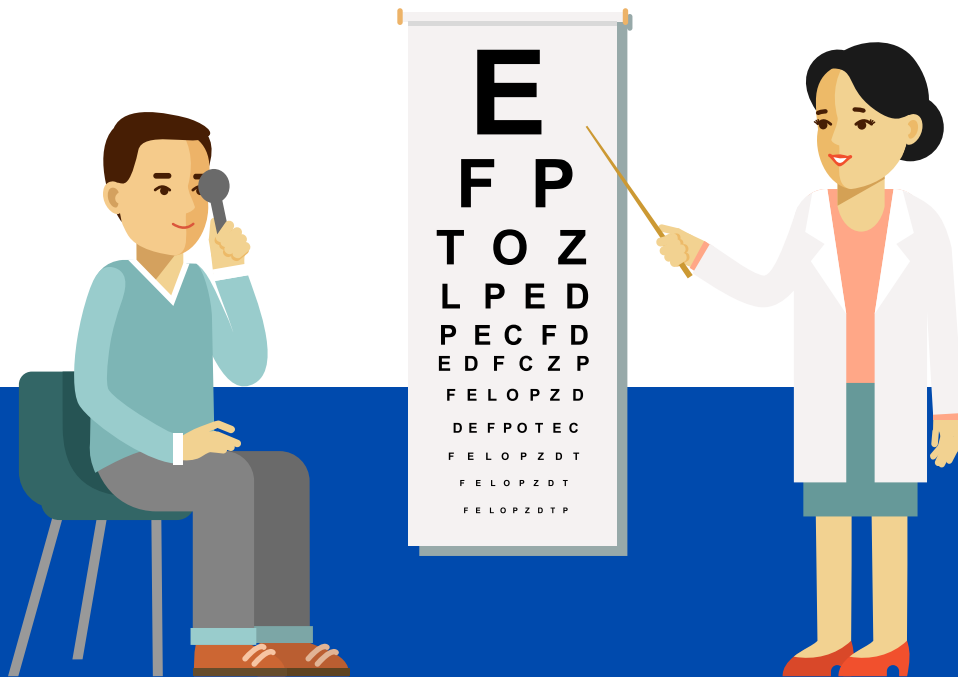
You are considered obese if your BMI is  $\geq 30$ .



# Step Nine

## Drink Plenty of Water

The human body is made up of 70% water. Water is essential to the normal working of the body and for keeping your eyes healthy. Dehydration can lead to dry, sore, and irritated eyes. The Food Standards Agency recommends that you drink approximately 1.2 litres (6-8 glasses) of water every day and more when you exercise or if the weather is hot.



# Step 10

## Have Regular Eye Examinations

It is recommended that you have an eye examination once every two years unless advised otherwise by your optometrist. An eye examination will not only detect problems with your vision, but it can also uncover a number of other underlying health problems.

An eye examination really is an essential health check and helps to keep you and your eyes healthy.

# CONTACT US

For information, advice and support, get in touch!

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