Here are 15 Eye-Healthy Tips for you and your Patients

1. Consider using a humidifier inside. Not only does humidity drop outside, but people also turn up their heating so the air inside is even drier than the air outside. A humidifier adds soothing moisture to the air and may relieve dry eye.

2. Protect your eyes when outside. Consider wearing a brimmed hat, sunglasses, goggles, or a visor. Wind, UV rays, and the elements irritate dry eyes even during the colder months. Also, damaging UV rays still cause premature eye aging during the winter.

3. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. If cold water doesn’t appeal to you, try herbal tea or hot lemon or ginger infused water.

4. Position your furniture so you are not sitting in a space where your heating vents blow directly on your face. Also, avoid sitting too close to heaters and heating vents.

5. People tend to spend more time using their computer, television, or other devices during fall and winter. Back to school time and the end of the summer weather causes people to spend more time working, studying, or enjoying indoor passive activities. Be sure to give your eyes frequent breaks since most people tend to blink less while focused on monitors, device screens and while preforming detailed work related to projects and concerns.

6. If you wear contact lenses, consider wearing your glasses a little more frequently since contacts tend to irritate dry eyes. Also, glasses offer a barrier between you and the environment.

7. If you wear eye makeup, be sure to remove your makeup before going to bed. Mascara and other eye makeup can sometimes contribute to dry eye and eye irritation by clogging tear ducts. Carefully washing with warm water, a soft cloth, and a gentle cleanser that contains tea tree oil helps prevent this from happening.

8. Use an over the counter or prescription moisturizing eye drops. Talk with your optometrist for guidance on the appropriate product for your needs and your medical history. For many patients, artificial tears and an eye-healthy lifestyle helps restore hydration to their eyes.

9. If you smoke, consider quitting. If you do not smoke, avoid secondhand smoke since it also dries and irritates your eyes (and lungs).

10. Limit consumption of coffee and other caffeinated beverages. Caffeine is a diuretic that can further exacerbate dry eye. Be aware of “hidden” caffeine in over-the-counter pain medication, chocolate, tea, and sodas. Also, limit your consumption of alcohol as it too is a diuretic.

11. If you use a blow dryer, be sure to avoid pointing the hot air at your face and eyes. The same applies to any other fan or device you use that blows hot air.

12. Eat foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids such as fish or walnuts. Also, consider taking omega-3 supplements. These healthy fats also help maintain lubricated eyes and they may reduce inflammation.

13. Consume foods rich in vitamins A, C and E. These eye-friendly nutrients support the eyes in several ways. Sources include citrus fruit, carrots, avocados, and other fresh produce. Consider supplementing as an option to ensure you consume enough of these vitamins.

14. As much as possible, avoid rubbing or touching your eyes as it irritates them and may lead to increased inflammation.

15. Many patients find that warm eye compresses soothe their dry eye symptoms. Just be sure to avoid spreading infection from one eye to another by using a different cloth and different water for each eye.

Living an eye-healthy lifestyle can help dry eye or relieve the symptoms