



## #LoveYourEyes: World Sight Day 2021

14 October 2021 marks World Sight Day, which this year focuses around the theme of #LoveYourEyes. “Nearly everyone on the planet will experience an eye health issue in their lifetime” according to the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), who leads on [World Sight Day campaigns](#). So, this provides a useful reminder to think about the importance of your eye health.



Surveys have shown that people fear losing their vision more than any other sense<sup>1</sup>, and yet few people take care of their eyes from an early age. So, how should you love your eyes? The [IAPB Good Eye Health Guide](#) presents a 4 step approach: Prevent, Protect, Preserve and Prioritise.

A healthy lifestyle, including eating a balanced diet and regular exercise are a first step to prevention. You can protect your eye sight from UV light with high quality sunglasses, and also by adopting a good cleaning regimen, particularly if you wear make-up. And most importantly you should manage your screen time and take regular breaks. The 20-20-20 rule is a useful rule of thumb: For every 20 minutes spent using a screen, you should try to look away at something that is 20 feet (about 6 meters) away from you for 20 seconds.

To preserve your eyesight there is nothing like a regular comprehensive eye examination by a qualified eye care professional. Spectacles or contact lenses, with an up to date prescription, enable you to carry on with your daily life as normal. But an eye examination doesn't just check vision, it is also an important healthcare check. The back of the eye is the only part of the body where blood vessels can be assessed through visual inspection, without the need for an invasive procedure. This enables a wide range of health issues such as diabetes, hypertension and neurological conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis, to be detected through an eye exam.<sup>2</sup>

If you don't already, now is the time to prioritise your eye health and make eye exams part of your routine health examinations.

ECOO and its members are proud to support World Sight Day. And you can too. Why not help educate your family and friends about the importance of eye health? #LoveYourEyes - a life mission for everyone.

### About ECOO

The European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO) is the European organisation which represents the interests of optometrists and opticians from 25 countries. It aims to promote eye health to the public across borders and to harmonise clinical and educational standards of optometric and optical practice throughout Europe. Website: [www.ecoo.info](http://www.ecoo.info)

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluating Whether Sight Is the Most Valued Sense, Jamie Enoch, MSc; Leanne McDonald, MSc; Lee Jones, PhD1; et al, October 2019, JAMA Ophthalmology, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamaophthalmology/article-abstract/2752217>

<sup>2</sup> Cognitive impairment negatively impacts allied health service uptake: Investigating the association between health and service use; Catherine A. MacLeod et. al.; March 2021, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352827320303578>