March is a Month to be Aware

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There is a lot going on in March. It is National Eye Donor Awareness Month, National Save Your Vision Month and ends with National Doctor's Day on the 30th. Here is your one stop guide to vision awareness subjects you should be aware of.

National Eye Donor Awareness Month

The Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) is a not-for-profit organization of eye banks dedicated to the restoration of sight through the promotion and advancement of eye banking. The oldest transplant association in the United States, the EBAA is a nationally recognized accrediting body for eye banks. Since 1961, EBAA member banks have restored sight to nearly 1,000,000 individuals.

National Save Your Vision Month

Save Your Vision Month is held every March and aims to increase awareness regarding good <u>eye care</u>. Organized by the American Optometric Association, the main focus of this event is to encourage more people to go for regular eye exams. With computers becoming an everyday part of people's lives, the risk of eye strain and damage is higher than before. Apart from ordinary eye care, this month specially focuses on eye care in the work place with an emphasis on employers to take eye care and health seriously.

Today, almost every work place is fitted with computers, whether it's a corporate office or a small library. One of the biggest problems of continued and persistent computer use is eye strain. Many people who use computers for long stretches of time tend to complain about symptoms like dry eyes, blurry vision and eye strain. While it might not be feasible to cut down on computer use, there are a number of ways to maintain good eye care and health while you work. First of all, regular eye exams are a must and it's important to tell your doctor how much computer work you do each day. When using your computer, make sure that you stop for breaks at regular intervals. It's a good idea to just get up and walk to a window and just have a look outside. Allowing the eyes to look away from the screen, particularly at something soothing can be very resting for the eyes.

One problem many computer users face is a problem they probably aren't even aware of- that is the fact that they don't blink. When staring continuously at your monitor, you will blink a lot less than normal- this is what causes the problem of dry eye. When working at your computer, make a conscious effort to blink as much as possible. In fact, closing your eyes for a few seconds can really help as well. If you still face a problem, consider buying artificial tears and applying them to keep your eyes moist. If possible, install a humidifier in your work area.

The way you sit at your computer also plays a big role in the health of your eyes. Make sure the monitor is about 20 inches away from your eyes. The top of the monitor should be tilted a little below your eye level. Also make sure that you keep your monitor free of dust and fingerprints, as these can greatly reduce clarity. Last but definitely not least, remember that eating <u>healthy</u> can indeed improve the health of your eyes. Eating plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits as well as getting a good night's sleep are all important ways to preserve the health of your eyes. During this Save Your Vision Month, it's important to take the necessary steps towards better eye care.

National Doctor's Day

This is admittedly just a gratuitous attempt to gain favor with my boss – who is an Optometrist. But on a serious note, it might not be a bad idea to thank your Doctor if you see them this month for all they do for us.