

Talk with your teens about e-cigarettes

E-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco products among U.S. youth, according to the Surgeon General. E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that smokers use to inhale an aerosol, which may contain nicotine, flavorings and other chemicals. While there is debate about the pro and con effects of e-cigarette usage by adults, there are special considerations and concerns for young people.



The brain is the last organ to fully mature, with development continuing into the mid-20s. Young people who use nicotine in any form are uniquely at risk for long-lasting effects. The nicotine in e-liquids is readily absorbed from the lungs into the bloodstream. Once in the blood, nicotine stimulates the

adrenal glands to release the hormone epinephrine (adrenaline). Epinephrine stimulates the central nervous system and increases blood pressure, breathing and heart rate. Nicotine affects the development of the brain's reward system, often leading to nicotine addiction or other substance dependencies.

Nicotine exposure during adolescence likewise affects the development of brain circuits that control attention and learning. Other risks include mood disorders and permanent problems with impulse control – failure to fight an urge or impulse that may harm oneself or others.

Education and communication can help reduce use by young people. To help parents, teachers or other caring adults discuss their concerns with the teens in their lives, here are some suggestions:

Before the talk:

- **Get credible information about e-cigarettes and young people** at e-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov.
- **Be patient and ready to listen.** Avoid criticism and encourage an open dialogue.

- **Don't deliver a lecture;** your goal is to have a conversation.
- **Remind yourself** that it's ok to have the conversation over time, in bits and pieces.

Start the conversation:

- **Find the right moment.** A more natural discussion will increase the likelihood that your teen will listen. Rather than saying "We need to talk," you might ask your teen what he or she thinks about a situation you witness together, such as:
 - Seeing someone use an e-cigarette in person or in a video.
 - Passing an e-cigarette shop when walking or driving.
 - Seeing an e-cigarette advertisement in a store, magazine or on the internet.
- **Answer their questions.** State facts and share resources to illustrate your concerns. For some practical answers to probable questions, look for the Parent Tip Sheet at <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/resources.html>.
- **Engage in ongoing conversations to remind and repeat the information you've discussed.** Send texts of additional facts or links to other sources of information. Listen to their concerns and challenges.

Source: U.S. Surgeon General; National Institute on Drug Abuse www.drugabuse.gov



NICOTINE AFFECTS

the development of the brain's reward system, often leading to nicotine addiction or other substance dependencies.



• Family finance nights are good for kids

Raising money-smart kids

Devote family nights to financial ed; it's time well spent

It sometimes can be awkward to discuss money with family, but parents should step up and make it a priority to educate their kids about family finances – early and often. From a young age, money management is a lesson worth learning.

A primer in financial literacy initiates the process of giving children an invaluable and lifelong gift, and there are countless money topics to choose from. A good place to start is with the basics of how money is earned, saved and spent.

To ensure that family finance nights are productive for both parents and kids, consider the following:

- **Make it fun.** Present the idea to your kids as something exciting the family can do together. Choose a night when everyone's at home and there's no



conflict with a favorite TV show or other activity. Parents also might want to tie family finance night to something the kids will look forward to, such as pizza night. Keep the subjects relatively short – you can cover lots of ground in a half hour without it being overwhelming.

- **Keep it real.** Tie the agenda to what's important to your family. For

example, if you give your kids allowances, make family finance nights their paydays. If a child has been begging for an expensive video game, hold off discussing it until the meeting. If you want to buy a new car or are concerned about a credit card bill, use the time to share your thinking with the family and ask for their input.

- **Be consistent.** A regular meeting time makes it easier for everyone to plan to be there. It's also helpful if kids have some idea of what to expect. For example, you might agree on a simple agenda, such as 1) paying allowances; 2) asking for comments or questions related to money from each family member; 3) discussing a hot item of the month (buying that car); and 4) playing a money-related game.

- **Stay flexible.** Give your children plenty of opportunities to direct the conversation, and keep the discussion kid-relevant regardless of their different ages. For example, your 6-year-old might ask how to make change for a \$10 bill, while a high schooler might be interested in figuring out how to pay for college. Give each child ample time to express his/her financial concerns and insist that other family members listen respectfully. In addition, teenagers' schedules can sometimes make it difficult for them to attend every family finance night,



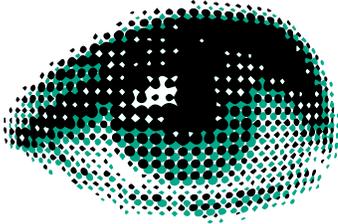
and you don't want them to feel like you're forcing them to be there. To help them understand the benefits of participating, say something like "You'll be grown and on your own soon, and learning about money will help you become independent that much quicker."

- **Be a role model.** Use family finance nights to show how you think through important spending decisions, pay bills and decide where to save or invest money. Parents who don't handle money perfectly themselves might be hesitant to teach budgeting, investing and other essential money skills to others. But acknowledging the up-and-down realities of handling personal finances is useful. Talk with your kids about what you think you do well, and where you think you could do better. If you've made money mistakes in the past, share the ones you feel comfortable talking about. Let them learn from both your successes and your missteps.

For more ideas about money activities to do with children, visit NEFE's website at www.nefe.org and search for "Simple Steps to Raising a Money-Smart Child: From Toddlers to Teens."

Source: National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) is an independent nonprofit foundation dedicated to providing Americans with the knowledge and skills they need to make positive choices and informed decisions concerning their personal finances.

Good eye care should
always be a priority



Treasure your vision and protect your eyes

By Donna Gingera, Hour-Zero

Imagine that one day you woke up and couldn't see. No hint of sunshine or surroundings. A world filled with complete and ongoing darkness. Undoubtedly, you'd be flooded by a sea of panic and fear.

Now you're probably thinking: What are the chances of that happening? Before you turn a blind eye to the reality of that notion, you should know that every day more than 2,000 Americans suffer eye injuries. That's a lot of people!

We often think of those working in construction, landscaping or other careers involving manual labor as being the most vulnerable to work-related eye injuries. However, every job – administrator, support staffer, teacher or librarian – has the potential to impact eyesight.

The increased and prolonged use of digital devices, including computers, tablets and cell phones, is having a significant impact on eye wellness and personal health. So much so that The New England Journal of Medicine has documented cases of smart phone blindness.

According to one report, 70 percent of American adults experience some form of eye trouble because of extended use of digital devices. The most prevalent problem reported is computer vision syndrome or CVS, also referred to as digital eye strain. CVS is not one specific problem, but rather a variety of issues related to eye problems like focusing fatigue, dry eyes and blurred vision. These issues, in turn, can cause headaches, inattentiveness, neck pain and back strain.

But don't despair. Investing a little effort in exercising your eyes, along with taking a few other precautions, can help combat CVS.

Here are a few easy ways to reduce computer vision syndrome and keep your eyes healthy:

The 20/20/20 rule

Every 20 minutes look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

The human eye was not designed to stare at a single object for extended periods. Looking away from your screen helps relax the focusing muscle inside the eye to reduce fatigue.

Focusing fatigue exercise

Look at an object that's some distance away for 10 to 15 seconds, then gaze close up at a different object for the next 10 to 15 seconds. Now look back at the distant object. Repeat this 10 times. This exercise helps reduce focusing

fatigue, which is when your eyes' focusing ability locks up (technically called accommodative spasm) after extended computer work.

See pink then blink

Studies show that the longer you work at a computer, the longer the interval between blinks – which leads to your eyes drying out. This idea might sound silly, but experts suggest you put a sticky note on your computer monitor to remind yourself to blink. The brighter the note, the better – neon pink works well visually and the message is a rhyming reminder.

If need be, consider using artificial tears. Eye drops can be helpful for preventing dry eye and keeping your eyes comfortable. It's a good idea to check with an ophthalmologist before starting any regimen involving your eyes.



March is Workplace Eye Wellness Month

Take some time this month to check out Hour-Zero's new workplace wellness training module – Take Two for You. It includes a short section on eye exercises that will help keep your eyes in great shape.

SIA offers HZ Online to our district members. This tool features trackable training, testing, easy monitoring, compliance reporting and more. To determine if your district is using HZ Online, talk with your supervisor or contact SIA Risk Manager Jennifer McCain at jmccain@sia-jpa.org.

Proper screen placement

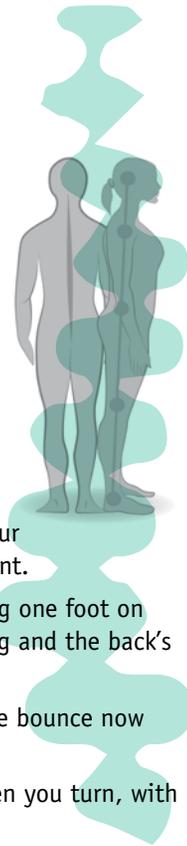
Position your screen 20 to 26 inches away from your eyes (about an arm's length) and slightly below eye level. The best angle for placement will vary from person to person and can range from 15 to 45 degrees.

These guidelines, which can help make computer work gentler on your eyes, are based on studies that found that looking above the horizon is tiring.

(continued on page 4)



- Stand without strain
- Routine eye care is key



Use WeTip

For more information
contact Teresa Franco
at tfranco@sia-jpa.org or
916-364-1281, ext. 1256.



1-800-78-CRIME

StopIT!

For additional information
on starting this program in
your schools
contact Rick Jenkins
at rjenkins@sia-jpa.org.

Standing without strain starts with good posture

If you stand a lot on the job, the position of your spine can either help or hurt your back. Observing a few basic rules of spinal positioning can make a great difference in your back's long-term health.

- **Maintain good standing posture** – align your ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles in a straight line. Your shoulders should be relaxed and your knees slightly bent.
- **Use a small footstool when you can.** Alternate resting one foot on the stool every few minutes. It keeps the blood flowing and the back's curvature intact.
- **Keep your knees flexed – don't lock them.** Do a little bounce now and then to keep the spine flexible and relaxed.
- **Avoid twisting your torso.** Move your whole body when you turn, with your feet and hips facing your destination.

Treasure your vision *(continued from page 3)*

Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate

Drinking water is good for your body; that means your whole body – eyes included.

Sufficient hydration can make a big difference for your eyes, particularly during winter months when heaters and furnaces make the air dry.

Blue light-reducing features

Take advantage of the blue light protection features on your phone, monitor or other devices. They are designed to lower the amount of blue light emitted by a screen. Blue light is part of the visible

light spectrum that penetrates deeper into the eyes. This penetration can lead to retina damage and other eyesight problems.

Apple's Night Shift and Windows 10's Blue Light Reduction Feature are just two of the apps, features and devices that lower the amount of blue light emitted by your display.

Visit an eye doctor

Make an appointment to have your eyes checked. A visit to a licensed ophthalmologist is the best way to address any concerns you may have about your vision or changes with your eyesight.



"May the roof above us
never fall in, and may
the friends beneath it
never fall out."

– Irish proverb

The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP).

Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder and be sure all employees receive a copy.