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Eye Symptoms You Shouldn't Ignore

If your eyes are persistently sore or red, it might be time to get help.

Submitted by dawnchen on Fri, 11/06/2015 - 07:24

If you experience these eye symptoms, get a thorough eye exam. By Dawn Chen



Photo: 123RF.com/ Raisa Kanareva

A busy and gadget-driven lifestyle is a sure recipe for eye strain. For those who do office work, it's common to experience dry and tired eyes after a whole day of staring at screens. Still, there are times when these symptoms hint at a more sinister condition. [Dr Lee Sao Bing](http://www.shinagawa.com.sg/our-doctors/dr-lee-sao-bing) (<http://www.shinagawa.com.sg/our-doctors/dr-lee-sao-bing>), medical director of [Shinagawa Eye Centre](http://www.shinagawa.com.sg/) (<http://www.shinagawa.com.sg/>), shares on the four common symptoms of eye discomfort and their causes, and when you shouldn't ignore them.

1. Blurred or cloudy vision

Tired and dry eyes can occur quite frequently, especially as a result of fatigue or eye strain. But if you experience only blurred vision in one eye, or if the blurry vision is persistent and unrelenting, it could be time to get help. If only part of your visual field is affected, this could signal a more serious underlying brain condition as well. In such cases, do not hesitate to see your ophthalmologist.

2. Red or bloodshot eyes

Eye redness can be caused by eye allergies – especially if you already have a sensitive nose – or because of environmental irritants such as dust or exposure to the haze. If your eyes are too dry or strained, the tiny blood vessels in the whites of your eye can break too, leading to bloodshot eyes. If you experience other accompanying symptoms like pus, burning or swelling together with eye redness, see a doctor as soon as possible as you could be suffering from an eye infection or conjunctivitis.

3. Floaters or flashes

Floaters are tiny specks or spots that drift across your vision. “As we age, the gel-like material (vitreous) that fills the inside cavity of the eye degenerates and causes clumping of this gel-like material,” says Dr Lee. “They move as your eyes move and seem to dart away when you try to look at them directly. Flashes are appearances of flashing lights or lighting streaks that are also a result of the ageing process.” But while those floating specks may be disconcerting, they’re generally not a serious issue, and can even occur as a result of near-sightedness. However, if you see a sudden onset of persistent floaters and flashes, or if you experience pain, make an appointment with your eye doctor soonest.

4. Eye pain and fatigue

Mild, temporary eye pain and fatigue are usually nothing to worry about, and can result from a lack of sleep or an allergy. However, if you experience persistent or intense pain, it could be a sign of an eye infection and will require medical attention.

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