

Your child's sight is precious.

Good vision helps them to learn, play and communicate with the world around them.

Yet, there are more than a million children in the UK with undetected vision problems.*

Children's eyes continue to develop until they reach the age of eight, so caring for a child's eyes in the early years can help lay the foundations for good vision that lasts a lifetime.

There are lots of simple things that you can do to help keep kids' eyes healthy.

Essential eye checks

Having regular sight tests – every two years, unless you're advised otherwise by your optometrist, is a great place to start.

Sight tests will ensure any problems such as childhood conditions like squint and amblyopia (lazy eye) or myopia (short-sightedness) are picked up early.

The sooner problems are identified the better the treatment outcome.

Remember sight tests are free on the NHS for all children under 16 years.

Eat a rainbow

Eating a rainbow of colourful fruit and vegetables helps ensure young eyes get the nutrients they need to grow healthily.

Foods like tomatoes, grapes and blueberries as well as fish, eggs and whole grains are packed with eye-friendly nutrients.

Go out and play

There is emerging evidence that spending two hours or more a day outdoors can reduce the risk of myopia, even if there is a family history of the condition.

Be safe in the sun

It's also really important to protect your eyes from the sun.

When you're young the lens at the front of your eye is really clear and lets more of the damaging sunlight in.

So here are 10 ways to help keep kids' eyes protected from the sun.

1. Protect their eyes whenever the UV Index rises to three or more.

Visit the Met Office website for information on UV levels.

2. Make sure the eyes and the area around your eyes is fully covered.

3. Wear sunglasses with a CE; UV 400 or British Standard Mark as this ensures they provide adequate UV protection.

4. Never wear toy sunglasses. These offer little UV protection

and can actually cause more damage because the tinted lenses dilate the pupil allowing more UV to enter the eye.

5. If your child wears glasses or contact lenses, check their lenses provide UV protection.

6. Wear a hat, cap or visor for added protection.

7. Sit or play in the shade.

8. Stay out of the sun between 12pm and 3pm when the sun's rays are strongest.

Up to 50 per cent of the total daily UV is emitted between these times!

9. Don't let them look directly at the sun.

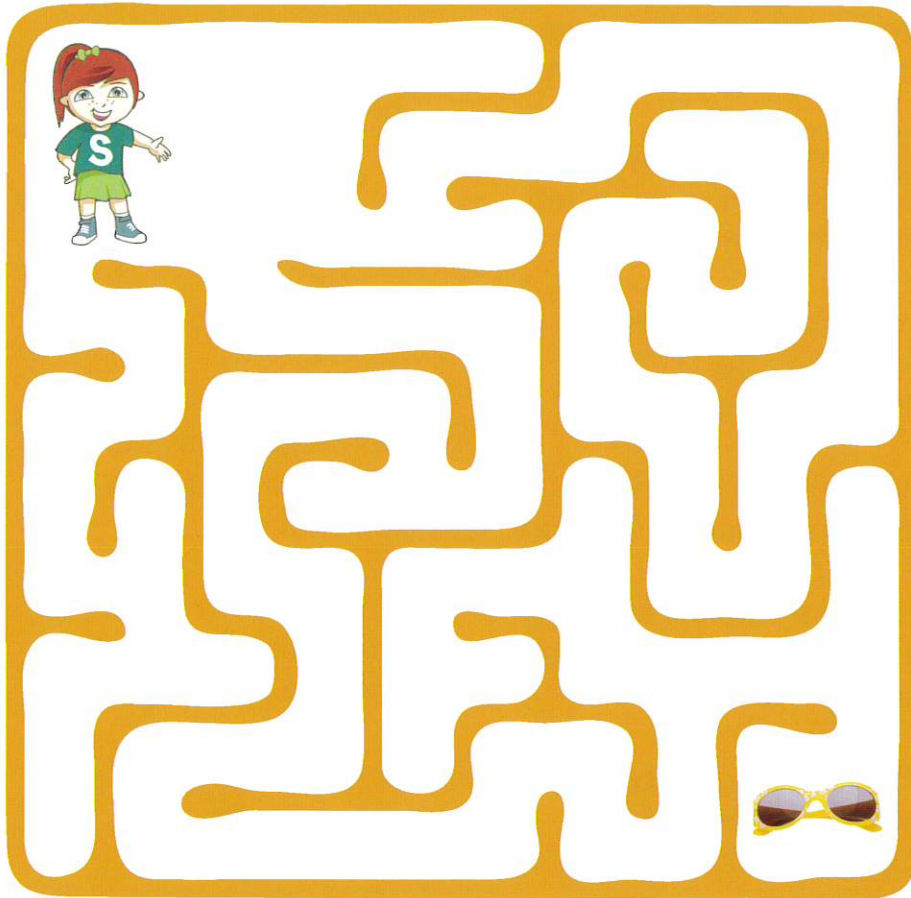
10. Remember the shadow rule... If your shadow is taller than you are your eyes are at greatest risk from UV as your brow bone no longer offers natural protection.

LOST SUNGLASSES

Can you help Ellen through the maze to find her lost sunglasses?

For more fun games and activities please visit:

www.visionmatters.org.uk



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Your child's eye health



**NATIONAL EYE
HEALTH WEEK**
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YOUR VISION MATTERS