



Blue Light and Screen Time Guide for Parents and Educators



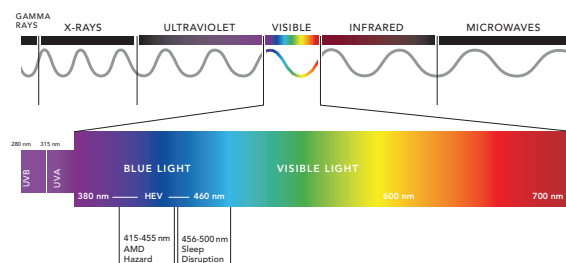
Strategies to help maintain children's eye health amid COVID-19

As many young people return to school and remote learning becomes more common, parents should remember that good eye health is important for everyone. This is especially true for students, as 80% of what children learn is through their eyes.¹

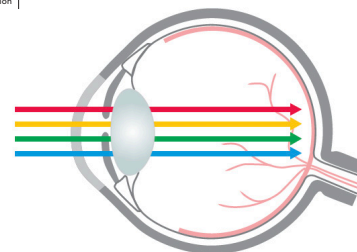
Children may be at higher risk of digital eye strain and eye health issues related to excessive screen time, in part because their still-developing eyes generally allow for more high-energy blue light to reach (and potentially damage) their retinas.² Additionally, children may often hold digital devices closer to their faces than adults do, potentially leading to a higher amount of blue light exposure. As a result, excessive high-energy blue light may produce oxidative and phototoxic damage to cells in the cornea and retina of the eye.³

What is blue light?

All digital devices, such as smartphones and computers, emit “blue light,” which is a low wavelength, high-energy light that has the potential to damage the eyes over the long term.²



Visible light is transmitted to the retina from natural and artificial light sources, between the range of 400-700 nm.



¹ <https://www.covid.org/page/learning>

² <https://www.aoa.org/AOA/Documents/About%20the%20AOA/Get%20Involved/Blue%20Light%20Impact%20in%20Children.pdf>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6288536/>

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Symptoms of too much screen time

Parents responding to a September 2020 survey report that the most common symptoms of excessive blue light exposure from digital devices for their children are **headaches** (67%), **blurred vision** (56%) and **dry eyes** (49%).¹ Part of that concern stems from the growing use of screen time for remote learning and during free time, with people spending an average of 13 hours per day on digital devices.²

Helping maintain children's eye health

Healthy vision is supported by a holistic approach, including awareness, education and eye protection solutions together with exams to detect and clinical care to treat vision problems.

Practical approaches to help encourage good eye health for children⁵

- 1 Keep computer screens at least 30 inches away from eyes.
- 2 Look for warning signs of eye health issues, such as squinting while looking at screens, discomfort or dizziness.
- 3 Get a comprehensive eye exam.
- 4 Consider using digital devices with built-in eye protection or add screen filters to help reduce blue light.
- 5 Consider adding a "student eye protection" option to your vision plan, helping provide coverage for blue light blocking eyewear.

The health impacts of digital eye strain and over-exposure to blue light may lead to:

- Dry, irritated eyes
- Trouble sleeping
- Blurred vision
- Reduced attention span
- Irritability and difficulty concentrating⁴

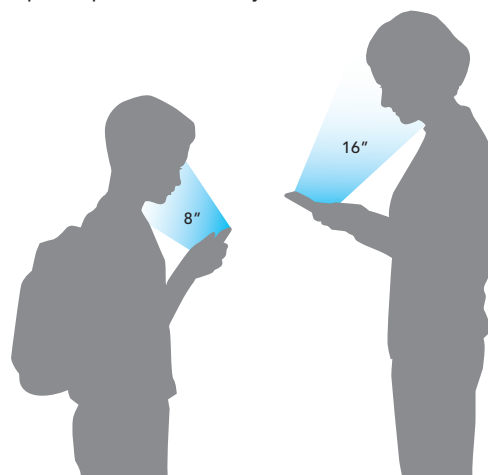


Educators and parents praise comprehensive vision care

A vision insurance plan that includes blue light protective solutions was ranked No.1 by 62% of teachers in a recent survey.¹

#1

Children may be more exposed to display intensity. Holding a display twice as close quadruples the intensity.³



¹ <https://www.eyesafe.com/uhc>

² <https://eyesafe.com/covid-19-screen-time-spike-to-over-13-hours-per-day/>

³ <https://www.2020mag.com/ce/blue-light-refocused-separating-science>

⁴ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324556803_Digital_eye_strain_Prevalence_measurement_and_amelioration

⁵ The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Talk with your healthcare provider about any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

Some parents and educators report concern about blue light exposure

A September 2020 survey of 436 parents and educators revealed:¹

- 93% of parents and 96% of educators are “very concerned” to “somewhat concerned” about the impact of digital device screen time on children’s eyes.
- A vision insurance plan that includes blue light protective solutions was ranked No. 1 by 62% of teachers in the survey. The benefits teachers most expect from blue light protection include attention improvement for students (64%), improved peace of mind for educators (58%) and sleep improvement for students (54%).
- By providing blue light protection for their children, primary benefits expected by parents includes “long term eye health” (69%) and “sleep and mood improvement” (60%).

Digital Eye Strain



13+ hours

are spent on screens per day since COVID-19 emerged.²

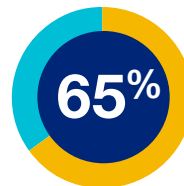
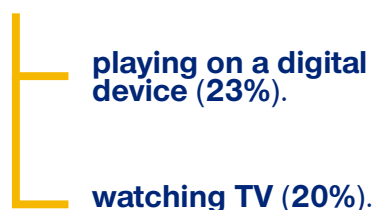
Vision and Learning



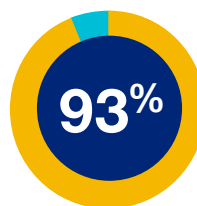
1 in 4

school-age children are affected by vision problems.⁴

Besides playing outside, the more popular activities children engage in are:³



of people are visual learners.⁵



of parents are concerned.¹

Myopia

More commonly known as nearsightedness, this is the inability to see far off objects clearly, and the condition is on the rise.

41%

of Americans are nearsighted, up from 25% in 1970.⁶



Getting outside and away from digital screens may reduce the risk of nearsightedness.⁷

¹ <https://www.eyesafe.com/uhc>

² <https://eyesafe.com/covid-19-screen-time-spike-to-over-13-hours-per-day/>

³ <https://www.thevisioncouncil.org/content/digital-eye-strain/kids>

⁴ <https://www.aoa.org/AOA/Documents/Practice%20Management/Clinical%20Guidelines/EBO%20Guidelines/Comprehensive%20Pediatric%20Eye%20and%20Vision%20Exam.pdf>

⁵ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=587201

⁶ <https://www.nei.nih.gov/about/news-and-events/news/myopia-close-look-efforts-turn-back-growing-problem>

⁷ <http://iovs.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2183997>

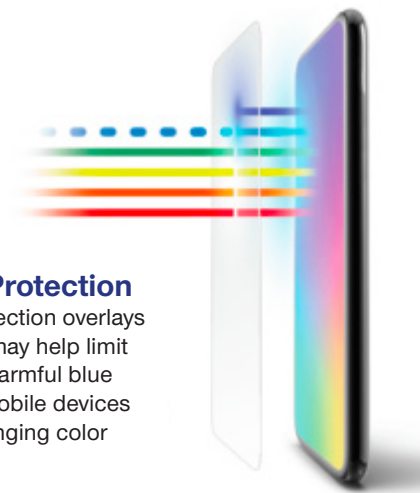
Product solutions that may help maintain eye health

Some new vision benefit programs¹ may offer a variety of options for supporting a healthier learning environment, including discounts for:



Laptop, Notebook and Computer Displays

Low blue light displays may help to reduce eye health hazards at the source.



Screen Protection

Screen protection overlays a filter that may help limit potentially harmful blue light from mobile devices without changing color integrity.



Eyewear

Eyewear with anti-reflective coating may help prevent potentially harmful reflective glare and reduce the risk of digital eye strain.²



Parents and educators may consider products that meet industry standards for low blue light

UnitedHealthcare Vision offers guidance on display types from leading brands that meet maximum permissible energy and color performance requirements – all guided by the latest health research and input from leaders in health care.³

¹ Coverage may be available to eligible beneficiaries with qualified vision plans underwritten or administered by UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or its affiliates. Administrative services provided by MARCH® Vision Care Group, Inc. or their affiliates.

² Pending availability

³ <https://eyesafe.com/standards>

Find out what UnitedHealthcare Vision can do for childrens' eye health in connection to screen time

eyesafe.com/uhc

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