



Eyecare Update

2011 EDITION

Dr. Andrea Mierzynski
Dr. Wendy Tam-Wai
Dr. Marta Witer

Dr. Kalyn Burroughs
Dr. Lesley Ho
Dr. Michael Beach

Associates in Optometry

2 Jane Street #507, Toronto, ON M6S 4W3 Tel 416-762-7391 Fax 416-769-8166 | www.isee2020.ca

Saturday Appointments Available.

On the political front

Last year we informed you that the Ontario government had passed legislation that would allow optometrists to prescribe certain medications for many eye conditions. Optometrists have been educated and trained to prescribe for more than 15 years and we are pleased to report that as of April 7, 2011 Optometrists in Ontario finally have prescribing rights for medications that will treat many common eye infections and glaucoma. In many cases, this will result in patients receiving full spectrum care in one location and avoiding extra referrals that are inconvenient to the patient and costly to the health care system. This announcement marks a milestone for Optometrists in Ontario, who have been lobbying our governments for these privileges for many years. Ontario is one of the LAST jurisdictions in North America to pass this legislation.

Frontiers in the treatment of AMD

In our last issue we discussed the most recent developments in the treatment and management of wet AMD. These drugs (Lucentis and Avastin) are injected inside the eye where they act to stop and reverse the growth of the abnormal blood vessels in the retina which cause wet AMD. They are the first treatments that can improve vision in 40% of people with wet AMD. and will prevent further vision loss in approx 95% of patients. As for future treatments, sustained release devices are being investigated which will release a drug over longer periods of time so patients won't need injections every month. Other promising research lies in genetics. 3 new genes associated with AMD have been identified. It is also expected that stem cells will play a role in the future treatment of AMD. Stem cells could be used to regenerate damaged cells in patients with AMD, diabetic retinopathy or glaucoma. Most studies to date have been in animals but are promising.

Protecting your eyes from UV radiation

While Canadians have some awareness of the sun's danger to their skin, they are clearly not aware of the risks to their eyes, in summer and in winter. These risks include increased risk of cataract formation and age related macular degeneration. Only 6 percent of consumers name damage to eyes as a harmful side effect of UV exposure. Three-quarters apply sunscreen before prolonged sun exposure, but only a quarter wear a hat and 10 percent wear sunglasses. According to Health Canada, fresh snow can almost double UV exposure because it reflects up to

Nutrition Update: Omega 3's or 6's?

It is essential that we consume both of these fatty acids as the human body does not produce them, nor does it store them. However, recent research shows that over consuming omega-6 fatty acids in proportion to omega-3s, a common pattern in the North American European diets, promotes obesity and the development of various diseases. It has also been observed that the sufficient intake of omega-3s from marine sources appears to significantly slow the development of AMD (Age related macular degeneration). Only 2 specific omega-3s are of any real use to the human body, namely eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), and docosahexanoic acid (DHA), which both come from seafood. Recent medical studies have shown that consuming omega-3 fatty acids reduces the risk of dry AMD progressing to advanced/wet AMD by 39%. That's a pretty impressive number. If you eat more than 2 medium servings of fish per week (or a little more than 230g) you are probably eating enough. That's the amount of fish (and fatty acids) required to achieve the 39% number. If you, like most Canadians, don't get around to eating this much fish every week of the year, maybe you should consider an ocular vitamin. Please discuss this with your optometrist at your next appointment.

Focus on Zinc:

Zinc is an essential trace mineral that helps reduce free radicals in the human body. Several studies show that zinc, taken in combination with other essential antioxidants significantly reduces the risk of advanced AMD development. Zinc may also help prevent cataract formation.

85 percent of the radiation. In Canada, a sunny winter day can be more dangerous than a summer day. Also, while the low angle of the sun offers the north some protection from UVB and UVC, it doesn't do as much against UVA. All ultraviolet radiation is stronger at high altitudes too. According to Health Canada, someone at 2000m will get 30 percent more UV exposure than someone at sea level. Remember to talk to your optometrist or our staff if you have questions.

On a personal note ...

2011 is a milestone year for Dr. Andrea Mierzynski. The year marks 20 years of practicing optometry, 18 of which have been here in the Bloor West Village! The past year has been marked by good health and a great year of travel with her family to Barcelona, Paris, Prague and The Netherlands. She is thrilled with the passage of long awaited therapeutic drug legislation which means she will be better able to address the eye health needs of her patients.

Dr. Wendy Tam-Wai joined Dr. Mierzynski in the Princess Margaret Hospital Walk for Women's Cancers in September 2010, which is the largest cancer walk in North America. During the walk, Dr. Tam-Wai was inspired by the strong women and men who have battled (or continued to fight) cancer. She would like to thank her patients for their support in the race to find a cure. On a final note, Dr. Tam-Wai is pleased to report that her golf game has gotten much better than last year and she is now on the fairways more than in the hazards.



Dr. Mierzynski and Dr. Tam Wai join the Princess Margaret Hospital Walk for Women's Cancers.

In 2010 Dr. Witer was appointed the Board Lead for Education of the Ontario Association of Optometrists. In this role, she organized a web-based public education campaign that was launched in October 2010 and includes information on some common eye conditions, a listing of optometrists, and a province wide photo contest, with great prizes to be won for best photo in several categories. Please go to www.seeyoureyedoctor.ca to check out the campaign. We encourage you to send the link to friends, enter the contest, and let us know what you think. In late 2010 she joined the Board of Directors of the Vision Institute of Canada. Although these activities leave little time for direct patient care at 2 Jane St., Dr. Witer really enjoys connecting with and caring for her long-time patients on a weekly basis.

Dr. Kalyn Burroughs has been an associate with our office for eight years. She graduated from the University of Waterloo with a Bachelor of Science degree and received the Proficiency Gold Medal for top marks in her Doctor of Optometry program. Over the years, she has enjoyed watching the practice grow as she meets new patients and continues to care for her established patients. In optometry, she has special interests in contact lenses, pediatrics and ocular health. At home, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two children, ages four and two.

"It's been 2 years since Dr. Beach had laser eye surgery and his vision is still 20/20. He would be pleased to discuss his experience, and the options available to you, at your next eye exam. We provide co-management care for all the major surgical centres in the city."

Dr. Lesley Ho had a very busy 2010 working full time and planning her wedding. She is excited to start married life with her new husband who works for Molson Coors Canada. She is quickly learning the joys of home ownership, and enjoys reading in her spare time. Dr. Ho also enjoyed volunteering at the 4 Villages Community Health Centre doing screenings for in-need neighbourhoods. Having been a part of our practice for three years, she is excited to see returning patients and is also accepting new patients.

Did You Know?

Slightly more than 11 million Canadians, more than one-third of the population, wear prescription eyeglasses.

Extensive video game playing can reorganize the brain's basic cortical network and significantly improve hand-eye coordination? A recent York University study suggests that this could help experienced gamers more effectively perform complex visuomotor tasks, such as laparoscopic surgery, than non-gamers and might even have implications to reverse the negative effects of neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's.

Are you able to enjoy a 3-D movie?

Did you know that up to 56% of people ages 18-38 have binocular vision problems that can make watching 3D content difficult or impossible. With the increasing number of movies available in 3D, some consumers may suddenly discover that they suffer from lazy eye, convergence issues, poor focusing skills and other visual problems that they might not have previously known existed.

Low vision statistics:

- Nearly 1,000,000 Canadians have early-stage AMD and nearly 250,000 have advanced stage AMD
- Nearly 500,000 Canadians have some form of diabetic retinopathy, of which 100,000 have a vision-threatening form of the disease and more than 6,000 have become blind
- A quarter of a million Canadians have glaucoma and half of them are unaware of it
- Nearly 2.5 million Canadians have cataracts
- 43,000 Canadians lose their eyesight partially or completely each year
- The number of blind and visually impaired Canadians has increased 37% in the last 10 years.

Complete or partial loss of eyesight:

- Double the difficulties associated with activities of daily living
- Cuts the ease of social functioning in half
- Doubles the risk of falling
- Triples the risk of depression
- Quadruples the risk of hip fracture
- Doubles the mortality rate