

Don't turn a blind eye to vision problems

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(HealthDay)—Your eyes are subject to a wide variety of health conditions, from minor annoyances to serious chronic diseases and even cancer.

While it's never a good idea to ignore any change in your vision or in the appearance of your eyes, call your doctor right away if you experience the following [warning signs](#).

Report any sudden spots and strings in your field of vision, flashes of light in one or both eyes or partial vision loss, especially if you recently injured the eye. You could have a detached retina.

Eye pain, redness and sensitivity to light can be signs of an inflammation, while itching, burning and a lack of natural tears may be symptoms of dry eye.

A firm lump on an eyelid or along an edge is often a sty that will go away on its own in a few days, but if it lingers or grows, see your doctor.

More serious signs are redness that spreads and rapid swelling. Conjunctivitis is a contagious infection that can cause a discharge and turn the whites of your eyes pink or red. You may need antibiotics. Redness, blurry vision and the sensation of a grain of sand in your eye could be from debris lodged under a lid or a more serious scratched cornea.

Pain and certain changes in vision can be signs of more widespread problems, from thyroid disease to an autoimmune disorder, so always bring them to the attention of your doctor.

And, of course, protect your [vision](#) with an annual eye exam, including tests that can uncover problems early on, before you see any signs.

More information: The American Academy of Ophthalmology has an A-to-Z listing of [eye information](#), from the anatomy of the eye to common conditions and treatments.

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