



# SIGNS OF EXCESS SCREEN TIME



*It is important to understand that our eyes are not designed to be focused on a computer screen for hours at a time.*



Signs that you or your family member has been looking at digital devices too long, or has difficulty looking at a computer screen, tablet or other digital device, include:

- Eyes feel strained and tired
- Dry eyes
- Headaches
- Sensitivity to light
- Neck pain
- Blurred vision
- Loss of productivity
- Decreased vision at night

One of the causes of visual stress is the working distance required to use the variety of digital devices. Many people have their eyes too close to the digital device, so whenever possible, keep the screen at arm's length. Special lenses can be prescribed that are designed to help reduce the strain. Be sure to let us know the actual distance from your eyes to your computer monitor when you come in for your appointment.

If it is possible, reduce your time on digital devices and computers and apply the 20-20-20 rule: take a break every 20 minutes and look 20 feet away for 20 seconds. The easiest way to implement this is to set a timer when you sit down to work on a computer or digital device.

Children (and adults) with eye movement, tracking and eye coordination problems may also have difficulty understanding the information presented with these devices. But, because children do not always know how they are supposed to see, they do not complain. As a result, in many cases these vision problems are easily mistaken for attention and learning problems because the symptoms are very similar.

Here are some of the more common signs that your child may be struggling with eye movement, tracking and/or eye coordination problems, when reading or doing close work:

- Eyes feel tired, sore, uncomfortable and/or hurt
- Have headaches
- Feel sleepy
- Lose concentration
- Have trouble remembering what was read
- Have ghosting, shadowing or double vision
- Need to reread the same line of words
- Words move, jump, swim or appear to float on the page
- Assignments take longer than they should
- There feels like there is a "pulling" feeling around the eyes
- The words blur or come in and out of focus
- Lose your place

In addition, some children might enlarge the font size or avoid doing schoolwork on the computer, even though they might enjoy playing video games for hours.

If you or your child experience two or more of these symptoms on a regular basis, or you feel your child is not performing to potential, please give us a call to schedule an appointment.

