

VDU User Information



The Village Optician

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Can a VDU damage my eyes or sight?

There is no evidence to suggest that even long-term intensive use of a VDU is damaging to the eyes, however, it is true that VDU users tend to complain of eye problems more than non-users.

Factors responsible for symptoms include:

- insufficient/infrequent rest periods
- incorrect positioning of screen/documents
- unsuitable lighting
- poorly designed workstation
- uncorrected spectacle prescription
- binocular vision anomalies
- dry atmosphere
- insufficient blinking due to concentrated task

Your rights as an employee

As an employed, regular VDU user you are entitled to a full eye-examination paid for by your employer when employment is commenced, at regular intervals thereafter, and if VDU-related eye problems should occur. (Although a visual screening may be provided, you are still entitled to a full eye-examination) Now that everyone is entitled to a free NHS eye-examination, your work may be happy for you to attend your own optician and pay only the extra fee for VDU-related tests.

Your employer is required to pay for basic spectacles should you require them *specifically for VDU use*, or an equivalent amount of money towards a pair of your choice. Note, this does not include updating existing spectacles already required for other purposes, even if used for VDU work.

Most VDU users do not require specific correction for VDU use. Your own spectacles will normally cope with the work until you are well into middle age. Where a younger person requires a specific correction it is not unreasonable for the employer to expect the optometrist to state the reasons.

VDU Eye-Examination

The purpose of the examination is to increase your comfort and accuracy when using a display screen. It will be helpful if you can provide details of your workstation design (screen/keyboard/paperwork distances), lighting, ventilation and work routine. All these can affect symptoms.

The Village Optician will conduct a full eye-examination taking into account your requirements and guidelines issued by the Association of Optometrists. Adequate time should be allowed for discussion of your ocular problems and methods of alleviating them. Extra time required will be reflected in the fee charged. Reports requested by your employer will only be provided with your written consent even when the examination is paid for by your employer.

Continuity of Eye-Care

To allow continuity of eye-care, The Village Optician believe that where an employee wishes to attend their existing optometrist, such arrangements should be made. Employers should be wary of selecting an optometrist purely on the basis of lowest fee being charged, as an examination carried out without reference to Display Screen Equipment regulations and AOP guidelines will probably not record sufficient detail for appropriate advice relating to VDU work.

We recommend:

- regular eye-examinations
- anti-reflection coated lenses to eliminate reflections and glare from screen, overhead lighting and windows
- frequent, complete blinking
- use of artificial tears in cases of dry eye
- adequate breaks from VDU work to reduce visual fatigue