

Digital device use - a guide for parents



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Parents regularly debate how much screen time their children should have for numerous reasons, one of which may be their concern for their vision.

With a dramatic rise in children developing myopia (short-sightedness), some point at the rise in the amount of time children spend in front of screens, usually iPads or phones, be it at school, doing homework, communicating with friends or playing games. Add in watching TV, and most children are spending hours a day looking at a screen.

Tips for parents:

1. Blue light that is emitted from screens can be very tiring for children's eyes, causing headaches, blurred vision and disturbed sleep patterns. Purchase your child some blue light filtering spectacles or tinted lenses, which will filter out the harmful effects of blue light.
2. Holding phones, tablets, games consoles and kindles close to the face, requires children to use their eyes' zoom function causing eyes to tire. Increase text size and encourage them to hold the appliance at arms length, will help.
3. Encourage them to take a 20-20-20 break: every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break, looking at something 20 feet away. A rule we should all stick to.
4. Although genetics play a significant role in whether a child will be short-sighted, other risk factors include how much time they spend indoors and how much time they spend focussing on near tasks. So spending more time outside may help.
5. Ensure children have their eyes examined annually but immediately if they have any issues with their vision. An eye examination will investigate any prescription, or muscle weakness that may be making close vision tasks difficult.

Please see our leaflets on blue light and digital eyestrain for further information or speak to your optometrist if you have any concerns. Visit cameronoptom.com/myopia for further information on short-sightedness in children.

Cameron Optometry

5 St Vincent Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6SW

0131 225 2235 | vision@cameronoptom.com |

