

Eye Care Benefits Impact Performance and Morale

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The little things tend to go unnoticed, until they become something bigger we cannot avoid. This is often the case with your vision. Small differences can be difficult to detect, until they significantly affect your vision. These issues may require medical attention or, in some instances, result in vision loss.

AMERICANS ARE LAX IN PREVENTIVE CARE

Employees highly value their sight, according to a 2007 Eye-Q survey conducted by the American Optometric Association (AOA). Eyesight is the one sense Americans worry most about losing. However, while eyesight is important, many individuals knowingly engage in practices that could be harmful to their eyes and vision.

The AOA reports that many Americans are lax in scheduling regular eye care health screenings. Of the individuals who require corrective vision lenses, one-third report not seeing their eye doctors annually. And for those who do not need corrective assistance, 35 percent admitted to not visiting their vision specialists in the past five years, and many others reported they have never had their eyes checked.

Vision Misconceptions. Americans frequently have misconceptions about eye-related health issues. In the AOA survey, most respondents believed the two behaviors that are the most harmful to their eyes are reading under dim lights (83 percent) or sitting too close to the T.V. (78 percent). The American Optometric Association reports that although these choices are uncomfortable for one's eyes or vision, the behaviors considered most detrimental to eye health are smoking cigarettes, eye rubbing, and consumption of alcohol and caffeine.

ONE IN FOUR KIDS HAVE UNDIAGNOSED VISION PROBLEMS

The eye health needs of their children also rank high on the list of employees' concerns. Many are concerned that their kids receive comprehensive wellness exams for the early detection of vision problems.

Behavior May Identify Vision Concerns. The AOA reports that nearly one-third of all children have never been to an eye doctor, and about half of American parents do not know that behavioral problems can indicate a child's vision impairment issues. And in some situations, literacy issues could be linked to vision problems.

20/20 Vision ≠ Excellent Vision Health. Currently more than 10 million children in the U.S. have undetected vision problems. Many of these children participate in vision screening tests, often passing with 20/20 vision. Traditional vision tests can only indicate that a child tested can read the letters 20 feet away. These tests do not readily identify children's eye-tracking skills or ability to focus their eyes over a short period.

Symptoms to Observe. Symptoms of vision problems in children include intermittent blurring, loss of concentration, regular occurrence of headaches or consistent loss of place when reading, diminished focusing power, or inability to make one's eyes work together. These conditions can affect a child's performance in school and result in the misidentification of the root cause of learning issues. Vision problems can become obstacles for kids to pay attention and learn in school, work effectively, or enjoy life.

VALUE OF COMPREHENSIVE EYE EXAMS

Comprehensive eye care examinations employ more than eye tests to identify corrective vision needs. During wellness exams, patients are educated about their eye health and participate in a range of screenings to detect medical and vision concerns.

New computer-based screenings can identify changes in patients' eyes that could indicate the early stages of eye health problems. And today, eye doctors have more options for rehabilitation and treatment of eye diseases if detected before patients begin to notice a change in their vision

EYE CARE INSURANCE: A VITAL BENEFIT

Vision problems may significantly affect employee morale, performance, and productivity. Employees are more likely to get their eyes tested regularly if their employers offer coverage options for eye care examinations and services. However, nearly 40 percent of employees do not have eye care insurance. Eye care insurance features a relatively low premium cost, and the value is significant since routine eye wellness examinations may prevent serious vision or medical concerns. Employers need to educate employees on the value of their eye care benefits to avoid vision impairment and detect diseases and other medical concerns in the early stages.

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