

TOTAL EYE HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

As the sun is an important entity of universe similarly eyes are prime sensory organ of human body. One can see this beautiful world with eyes as well as can express feelings like love, affection, hate, anger etc. through eyes. Poets and writers have described eyes in many words like *Meenakshi*, *Harinakshi* etc. in their literature. Hence eyes are one of the important sensory organ.

In *Swasthvritta* characteristics of health (*Swasth*) is defined as balance of *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, *Malas*, *Agni* as well as *Prasannatva* (well being) of *Aatma*, *Indriya*, and *Mana*.

Many internal as well as external factors are responsible for ill health. Internal factors like imbalance of *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, *Malas*, *Agni* and *Hin*, *Mithya* and *Atiyoga* of *Kala*, *Indriyarth* and *Karma* and external factors like pollution, faulty lifestyle, unbalanced diet, are causes for ill health.

Eyes like *Chakshurindriya* can also be vitiated due to external factors like air pollution (toxic gases, harmful fumes and gases), variation in temperature, over indulgence in computer etc. are nothing but *Ati* and *Mithya yoga* of *Chakshurindriya* causing symptoms like burning sensation, itching, dryness, redness, strain, pain, excessive watering, fatigue of eye muscles, cataract, myopia, glaucoma etc.

For the symptoms, preventive management can be done in following way-

A) Providing nourishment in the form of supplements and diet-

By administering *Nitya Rasayan* like cow's milk, cow's ghee, butter, maska and adding food substances having qualities like *Mansa Dhatu Pushti*, *Majja Dhatu Pushti*, improving vision etc. daily.

According to modern sciences vitamin A is responsible for normal vision, vitamin A can be obtained from dairy products like milk, butter, ghee etc. and component of vitamin A Beta carotene from orange coloured vegetables and fruits like pumpkin, carrots, papaya, mangos etc.

B) Elimination of Doshas and counteracting normal production of Doshas of eyes-

Netra or eyes have *Alochaka Pitta* (*Tejamahabhoota*). *Jalamahabhoota* dominant *Kapha Dosha* can vitiate *Tejmahabhoota* which is opposite in characteristics, can cause inflammatory infectious diseases of eyes like *Netrabhishyand* (conjunctivitis).

For preventions of above explained pathology one can practice procedures mentioned in *Dincharya* i.e. daily regimen like-

i) *Anjana* (collyrium) - *Prasadana Anjana* like *Sauviranjan* or *Kajal* prepared from cow's ghee or castor oil can be applied regularly which can help to keep eyes normal.

ii) *Tarpana* and

iii) *Putpaka*- can be practiced in the complaints like dryness of eyes, redness, burning of eyes etc. One can use *Triphala Ghrita* for the same.

iv) *Saka* (eye wash)- Using *Triphala kwath*, rose water or even water for burning of eyes, itching and stickiness.

v) *Aschotana*- Eye drops- Medicated eye drops are beneficial for burning sensation, infections like conjunctivitis etc.

C) Exercises for eyes- For normal functioning and strengthening of eye muscles and improvement and normal vision one can practice following eye exercises as well as '*Trataka*' mentioned in *Yogashastra*.

1) *Palming*- Rub your hands together until they feel warm. Close your eyes and cover them lightly with capped palms. Avoid applying pressure to your eyeballs. Take deep breaths slowly and evenly while thinking of some happy incident or visualise a distant scene. After you see nothing but blackness, remove your palms from your eyes. Repeat *palming* for 3 minutes or more. 2) Close your eyes tightly for 3-5 seconds. Open them for

3-5 sec., repeat it for 7 or 8 times. 3) Massage your eyelids - Close your eyelids and massage them with circular movements of your fingers for 1-2 min. Make sure you press very gently and have washed your hands to avoid damage to your eyes. 4) Lightly press 3 fingers of each hand against your upper eyelids, hold them there for 1-2 sec. then release. Repeat it for 5 times. 5) Sit comfortably and relax. Roll your eyes clock wise, then counter clockwise. Repeat it for 5 times, blinking in between each time. 6) Hold a pencil in front of you at arm's length. Move your arm slowly to your nose. Follow the pencil with your eyes until you can't keep it in focus. Repeat it for 10 times. (Another approach is to tie an object to a hanging light string and swing it to and from while you try to keep the dangle in focus.) 7) Look in front of you at the opposite wall and pretend that you are writing with eyes. Don't move your head. This may seem difficult at first, but with practice one can do it. 8) Imagine that you are standing in front of a large clock. Look at the middle of the clock. Then look at any hour mark. Without turning your head, look back at the centre, then look at another hour mark. Do this at least 12 times. You can also do this exercise with your eyes closed. 9) Focus on an object in the distance as far as possible with a low contrasting background. Do this for a few minutes every hour or so. 10) Make up and down eye movements- starting from up and down, do this 8 times. Then do the side to side eye movements starting from left to right, repeat it for 8 times. Be sure not to force your eyes further than they want to go in any particular direction or you risk making your vision worse. 11) Always finish up either with palming or another relaxation technique. 12) Yogic kriya like '*Trataka*' can be performed as an exercise. The '*Trataka*' means to gaze steadily. Looking intently and to gaze at a small, single point until tears are shed from eyes is known as *Trataka*.

For practice of *Trataka*, sit in a dark room in meditative posture. Place a candle flame at the eye level at a distance of 2 to 3 feet. The candle flame should not flicker and remain still throughout the practice, keep the eyes open and gaze at the flame continuously for 5 to 10 min. till the eyes start watering. Then slowly close the eyes and try to keep the impression of the candle light in front of the closed eyes. Avoid any thoughts coming in mind. *Trataka* helps to improve the function of the eyes. It gives relief from eye strain, headache, myopia and early stages of cataract. Eyes become brighter by practice of *Trataka*.

In short by taking balanced nourishment, *Rasayans*, practicing procedures like *Anjana*, *Tarpana* etc. and performing eye exercises or *Trataka* one can achieve total eye health.

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