

# TOTAL EYE CARE

BERTRAM KRAFT, MD

## DEAR TOTAL EYE CARE PATIENT

Hello to all. My wonderful staff and I want to wish you and your family best wishes for a healthy and happy Holiday season. It has been my pleasure to send you these newsletters over the past year. I appreciate your interesting comments and suggestions for future topics.

Now that Thanksgiving is over and our eating habits have returned to normal, I'll continue my thoughts on Diabetes.

## DIABETES - PART 2

In my last newsletter, I described the 2 types of Diabetes that plague us. Type 1 is usually discovered early in life and is due to infection or heredity. We have no control over these conditions. Type 2 Diabetes is the adult onset variety and is associated with some modifiable risk factors: eating less to keep our weight down, exercising more, eating more from the healthier food groups, etc.

However, even if one maintains good and tight control of their glucose level, nearly 40 % of diabetics will develop some degree of **Diabetic Retinopathy**. The longer the time one is a diabetic, the more likely they are to develop this condition. Diabetic Retinopathy is the term used to describe damage to the blood vessels in the retina – the nerve layer of our eye. These damaged blood vessels can swell and leak fluid. This can cause **Macular Edema** (swelling of the central part of the retina) and reduced vision. In others, abnormal new vessels grow on the surface of the retina. These new vessels are very fragile and can bleed into the back of the eye causing a sudden complete loss of vision. This sometimes is preceded by black spots in the vision.

There are no symptoms in the early stages nor is there any pain. Treatments are most successful if the conditions are caught early. This is why all Diabetics need a Dilated Eye Exam on a yearly basis. We never know when the condition will start but usually a yearly interval is adequate to monitor the condition and prevent things from getting out of hand.

Once diagnosed the condition is graded into various stages which help to direct the treatment. OCT (Optical Coherent Tomography) and Fluorescein Angiography are two of the frequently used diagnostic tests to determine subtle retinal changes. Treatment with various lasers when indicated is the current treatment of choice.

**\*\*BOTTOM LINE\*\***

## Yearly eye exams for all you diabetics!

### DRY EYES

With the coming of winter and reduced humidity in the air, I thought that I would write about Dry Eyes. This is one of the most common complaints that an eye doctor sees.

Our corneas (the clear front surface of our eyes) need to be kept moist at all times. Dryness could lead to irritation, discomfort, and reduced and blurry vision. We keep our eyes moist by secreting a steady stream of watery tears from our **Lacrimal Gland**. The tears start in the upper-outer portion of the eyelid and then are washed over the cornea by our blinking eyelids - Just like the windshield wiper on your car. The excess fluid collects in the inner corner of the eye and is drained by the **Cannicular** opening of the eye lids into the **Lacrimal sac** and into the back of our nose and throat.

Normally we are not aware of our tears but if we produce excessive amounts due to emotions or injury, we can taste the salty tears in our throat.

### What are tears?

The tear film is made up of 3 components: The layer closest to the cornea is the inner MUCUS layer (made by the Conjunctiva). It adheres to the corneal surface and serves to keep the thick middle FLUID layer (made by the Lacrimal Gland) attached. The outer OILY layer (made by the Meibomian glands of the eyelid) prevents evaporation (THINK OIL SPILL). It is a brilliant system but to work well, all the components need to be in the correct proportion

### Symptoms of Dry Eyes

- Burning feeling
- Scratchiness
- White stringy mucus
- Excessive irritation (from smoke, pollution and wind)
- Excessive tearing

Excessive tearing sounds like it should be a cure for a dry eye! However, it can be a response of the eye to some forms of irritation combined with an abnormal tear film composition. PROCESS: Irritation sends message to the brain that tears are needed. If good tears are produced then the irritation is resolved and normal secretion resumes. If tear quality is poor, the message gets resent because the irritation is not relieved. The constant resenting overwhelms the drainage system and our tears can overflow onto our cheeks. Think Computer Virus!!

### Major causes of Dry Eyes

- Aging – the Lacrimal gland produces less volume (more common in post-menopausal

women)

➤ Medications

Antihistamines

Sleeping Pills

Psychotropic drugs (depression, anxiety, etc.)

Pain relievers

Diuretics

➤ Infection

Conjunctivitis – disrupts the mucus layer

Blepharitis infection of the eyelid and lid margin) – disrupts the oily

Layer

➤ Excess computer usage and close-up work

### **Treatment**

- ✓ Over the Counter (OTC) moisturizing and lubricating eye drops and be used a maximum of 4-6 times per day for temporary relief.
- ✓ Prevent evaporation by using a Humidifier
- ✓ Wrap around glasses to reduce wind evaporation
- ✓ Night time ointments

If these don't help we will need to see you to determine what other alternatives are available.

### **EYEGASSES SPECIAL**

**From now through December 31, 2010, receive a \$100.00 discount when you purchase one complete pair of eyeglasses costing more than \$300.00.**

**To test your near vision, here's the fine print:** You must present a printed copy of this email when you **place** your order. Coupon does not apply to purchases of multiple pairs of eyeglasses that together cost more than \$300.00. No other discounts may be combined with this coupon, but you will receive the sale price of merchandise that we have placed on sale. You are strictly limited to one coupon use per person. However, if you are simultaneously purchasing eyeglasses for yourself and a family member and each of you meets the other terms of

this offer, then both you and your family member will be entitled to this discount. This coupon has no cash value and cannot be redeemed for cash. Coupon is not valid on previous purchases.

With the Holiday season rapidly approaching, our stress levels are increased. I thought you might enjoy the following STRESS TEST that was sent to me by a patient a number of years ago.

**MONDAY and THURSDAY EVENING APPOINTMENTS** are now available in the Buffalo Grove office. Call for available times and dates.

If you have any questions or comments, I would be delighted to hear from you. Please email me at: [DrBKraft@BKraftMD.com](mailto:DrBKraft@BKraftMD.com). Many common questions can be answered by visiting our website at [www.drbkraft.com](http://www.drbkraft.com).

If it has been a while since your last exam, please do not hesitate to call today to inquire about scheduling your next appointment. For your convenience, you can now email either office to arrange an appointment. E-mail the Buffalo Grove office at [ReceptionBG@BKraftMD.com](mailto:ReceptionBG@BKraftMD.com).

**68 W. Dundee Rd.  
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089  
Tel: (847) 541-3334  
Fax: (847) 541-8442**