

How to deal with pandemic stress related eye problems

Maitree Baral :: 17/2/2022

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01/8 Issues related to eyes have peaked during the pandemic, experts say





Digital strain, prolonged screen time, working in a temporary workstation set up and working continuously for hours have become the new normal in life since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This coupled with lack of physical activity, and excessive work pressure has worsened the overall health of an individual.

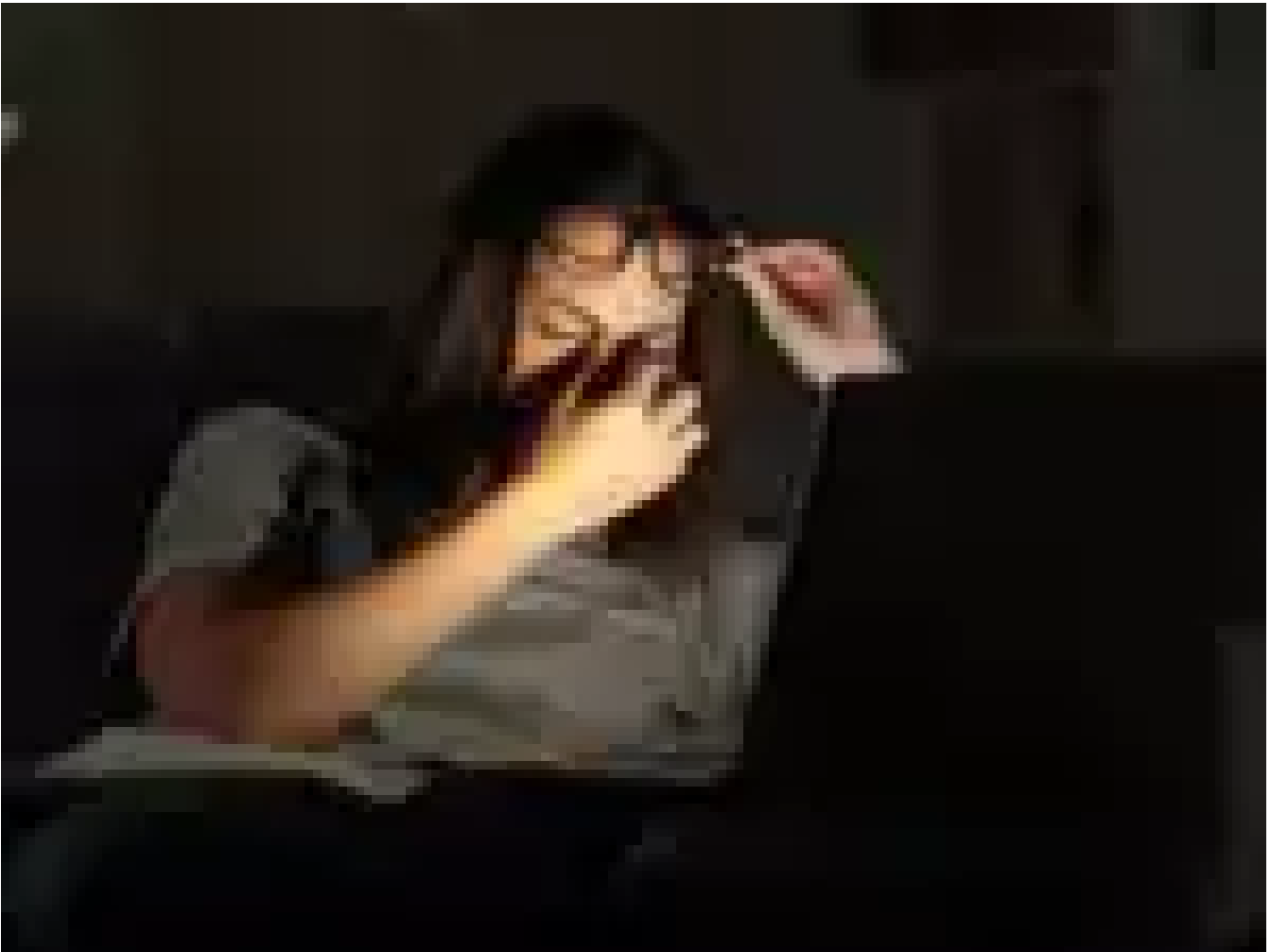
The human organ that has been the silent sufferer of COVID-19 pandemic are the eyes. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated change in human lifestyle has put a tremendous effect on the vision power of the body.

Complaints related to drying of eyes, itchiness, redness, double vision, blurred vision have peaked during the pandemic.

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02/8"Digital Eye Strain"





"Computers and mobile phones cause harm by emitting short high energy waves that can penetrate eyes and can eventually contribute to photochemical damage to the retinal cells, making an individual vulnerable to a variety of eye problems ranging from dry eye to age-related macular degeneration. It is collectively known as digital eye strain (DES) or computer vision syndrome," says a 2020 study published in the Indian Journal of Ophthalmology.

From office to education, the pandemic coerced human life to shift to online. Everything that happened physically was shifted to mobile phone apps, computers and laptops. Isolation, lockdown, shutdown also compelled people to seek comfort in gadgets.

The exposure of the eye to the digital space increased manifold soon after offices and schools were closed to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

Lockdown has changed sleeping habits. Ever since offices started functioning from home people have been sleeping late and till late morning, says Dr Partap Chauhan, Director of Jiva Ayurveda. Lack of adequate sleep puts a great strain on the muscles of the eyes and is one of the reasons why people are experiencing eye problems lately, he says.

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03/8What are the symptoms?





While itching and dryness are the most common symptoms which one should constantly check and give the eyes a rest as soon as it is seen, there are other symptoms too which can give a hint of the beginning of troubled vision.

Due to over strain, one can experience light sensitivity, tunnel vision or blurring of peripheral vision, and random spasms in the eye lids as well.

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04/8How can it be managed?





"It is commonly managed by non-pharmacologically and pharmacologically; non-pharmacological management includes correct ergonomic practices, maintaining normal blinking, the use of appropriate lighting, careful positioning of the digital device, adjusting image parameters (resolution, text size, contrast, luminance), and taking breaks, while pharmacological management strategies include using artificial tears," a research study says.

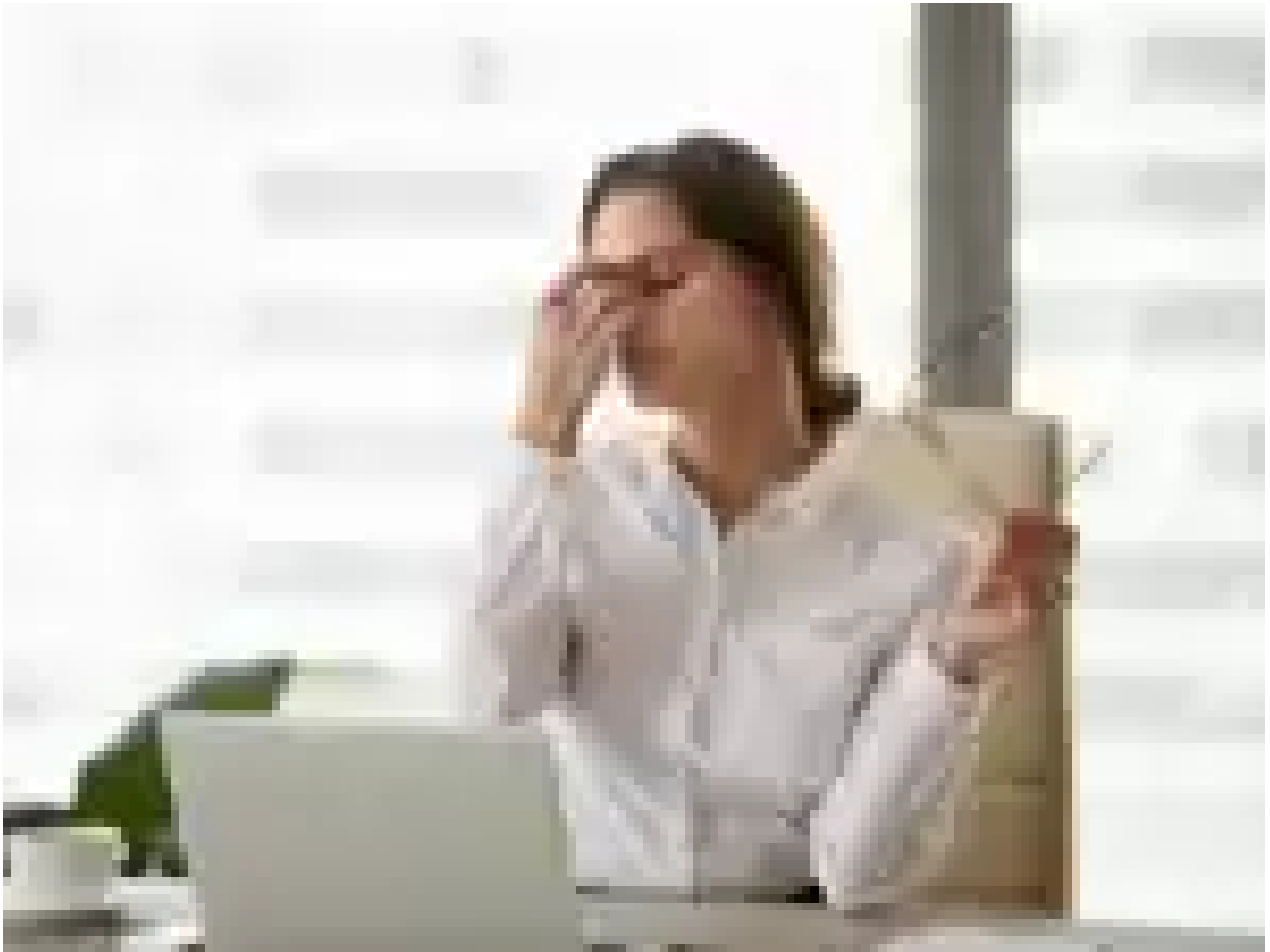
Dr Chauhan recommends going out, spending time on green lawns, and meditation during the evening or morning. "During meditation one can visualise greenery to calm down the strained eyes or one can meditate in a lawn either during morning or during evening to give the eyes rest," he says.

Selecting the right sitting posture while working from home is essential for the eyes. One should keep the work from home setup like the office set up so that posture and eyes are not strained.

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05/8Other factors





Medication of COVID leads to malfunction of the lacrimal gland leads to dryness, says Dr Manish Joshi, Senior consultant Ophthalmologist, Apollo Hospital. He also says that issues like dryness of eyes, cataract, glaucoma, viral infections in eyes, conjunctivitis, Keratitis, EpiScleritis, Scleritis are some of the conditions which are seen mostly after COVID, these days. "All sorts of eye infections starts from conjunctivitis to scleritis and vitritis is noted 6 months to 1 year after COVID," Dr Joshi adds.

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06/8How to improve eye health





The gold standard method that has always been recommended by eye health experts is the 20-20-20 rule. This rule says that a person using mobile phones and computer screens throughout the day should take a break every 20 minutes, look at an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Experts suggest blinking frequently while working and also advise to stop using mobile phones 2-3 hours before bed time.

Experts recommend good quality air for the eyes. Due to the pandemic and also because of work from home people are spending more time indoors. The indoor air is stagnant, and dries eyes. Taking a walk during the evening or during the morning will not only increase the mobility of the limbs, it will also provide the right amount of air and freshness to the eyes.

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07/8Eye rotation, other simple exercises to follow





Rotate the eyeballs from left to right, top to bottom for atleast 5 minutes every morning and evening, says Dr Chauhan. Doing this will strengthen the muscles surrounding the eyes.

One can also rub the palms continuously for 1-2 minutes till it warms up a bit and then place the palms on the closed eyes. This soothes the strained eyelids.

The Ayurvedic expert also suggests washing the eyes, with clean water or if possible properly strained triphala water, three to four times a day in between computer usage.

Meditation or practicing mindfulness is a very good way to calm down the strained nerves of the eyes.

One should also boost the internal ecosystem of the body to give the eyes good health from within. "Drink amla juice for better eye health," says Dr Chauhan.

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08/8Bottomline





"Consulting Ophthalmologist is very much advisable if any issue or abnormalities you feel post covid," says Dr Joshi.

Regular eye check up and incorporating soothing techniques like meditation coupled with having a healthy diet will keep the vision on track, says Dr Chauhan and suggests taking regular breaks between works and practicing Savasana during morning and evening.

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