

# NEWSLETTER FALL-WINTER 2017 2018

LARRY BICKFORD, O.D.

DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY

## Family Eye Health & Vision Care

3324-J State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105 By appointment 682-8011 [www.EyecareContacts.com](http://www.EyecareContacts.com)

### What's New In Contact Lens Technology Eye Health & Vision News



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#### Message Center

##### Got kids?

PLEASE bring in your K-6 children for free Well-Child Vision Screening. There's also low cost "well child" full examinations when necessary. Children's exams respect their developmental levels so be sure to tell us their age when scheduling their appointment. Eyeglasses and contact lenses for children are available.

Early morning and later evening exam appointments are available. If you are interested in a Saturday morning time, please let us know at least three weeks in advance as space is limited!

Office visits by appointment only, so please call first!

Save time! Download office forms from my web site:

visit: [www.eyecarecontacts.com](http://www.eyecarecontacts.com)

#### Myopia Control: What you need to know about the latest discoveries

Children, with some rare exceptions, are not born nearsighted. In fact, the exact opposite is true. But as the eye grows along with the rest of the body, something happens that causes the eye's optical system to focus incorrectly, requiring eyeglasses or contact lens in order to see distance objects clearly.

Studies have revealed that three things impact ocular development: genetics, environmental factors (like reading up-close for long periods of time) and eye muscle imbalance. We've tried vision system exercises for limited success in the past. Today, it appears that drugs (low dose atropine) and specially designed "defocus" optics (eyeglasses and contact lenses) can work to discourage myopia development. This treatment process is highly sought after in Asian countries where there appears to be a stronger genetic component for children developing myopia. This therapy is becoming more commonplace here and we have begun to offer it in our practice.

#### Got Stingy, Dry Or Itchy Eyes?

It's the time of year when indoor air is often very dry and outside, flowers and trees are blooming again. Catch a "cold"? Upper respiratory viruses that cause us to sneeze and cough can find their way into our eyes and can make them red and uncomfortable. Sometimes the symptoms are just annoying and simple, over-the-counter (OTC) eye drop treatment works fine. Other times we have seriously irritated, red eyes with mucous discharge that might require prescription medicine. Here's what makes red eyes and how to remedy the problem:

**Pink Eye.** This a term some people use to describe a red, irritated ocular surface. The correct term is conjunctivitis. The conjunctiva is a normally a clear membrane that covers the eyeball and the inside of the eyelids. It becomes red because the tiny blood vessels, usually too small to be seen, become dilated, larger with increased blood flow. This is an inflammatory reaction in response to irritation, allergy or infection. The infection may be caused by a virus or bacteria. Viral conjunctivitis usually affects both eyes where bacteria-caused infec-



tion may occur in only one eye. Transferring conjunctivitis to another person requires direct contact with tears. If you touch your infected eyes and then shake hands, or share a face towel, the infection may spread. Symptoms may include tearing, burning/stinging and sometimes itching. If caused by virus, there is no treatment except for perhaps using artificial tears drops and cool compresses to make it feel better. Symptoms can last 7-14 days, sometimes longer. If bacteria is the bug, it might go away by itself in a few days. *If there is pain, light sensitivity, vision changes, lids stuck together upon waking or yellow or greenish discharge*, the infection requires medical treatment. Call my office and see me for a prescription for antibiotic or antibiotic/steroid eye drops.

It is a myth that children with conjunctivitis (never use the term “pink eye”- again!) must stay home from school for weeks. This is simply a wrong, out dated concept. If it is bacterial, 24 hours on antibiotic drops and one day home is fine. If viral, the standard “don’t touch your eyes and cover your cough” is adequate and there’s nothing more you can do. Remember, the virus is transmitted via coughing and sneezing. Bacteria can be transferred by contact with the goopy discharge which will be addressed quickly when using antibiotic drops.



Credit: Anza Borrego Desert State Park

**Allergy red eye** almost always include itching as the primary symptom. There may also be excessive tearing *but no colored or thickened discharge*. The more you rub, the more it itches. Treatment includes artificial tears drops to moisturize and protect the conjunctiva and to help wash away allergen particles. Over-the-counter (OTC) oral antihistamines like Benadryl often helps, too. There are eye medicines to stop the itch—prescription antihistamine and/or steroid-containing drops as well as OTC anti-allergy drops.

**Dry Eye Syndrome (DES)** occurs when the tears, made of a mixture of water, oil and mucous, do not properly hydrate (wet) the cornea and the conjunctiva. Eyes get red and irritated and the tissues are progressively damaged. Symptoms may include: sandy, gritty, sometimes a burning sensation and/or your eyelids hard to open in the morning (but *not crusted and stuck together*.) Vision can be blurry between blinks. Allowed to continue, there can be minor cornea abrasions and pinguecula (yellowish, raised areas next to the cornea). The causes of dry eye are numerous. For example: clogged oil glands in the eyelid, reduced fluid production due to hormone imbalance or inflammation, certain systemic diseases like arthritis and diabetes, certain medications, excessive caffeine or alcohol, really dry air in the environment and spending a long time reading or at the computer. When we use our eyes for intensive near vision tasks, we tend to blink less often which can lead to decreased tear production and increased evaporation of tears.

Treatments are designed to address the symptoms and when possible, the underlying cause: There are nutritional support remedies, including omega 3 oils which can reduce inflammation and help with oil production; tear replacement drops to add moisture; and a number of medications that can help treat DES. If the eyelid glands are clogged, warm compresses and expression, sometimes with medication are recommended. Treatment of any underlying systemic causes is important, too. If you have symptoms, it’s best to not ignore them - seek treatment. *Be sure to mention that you’d like to be checked for DES so we can schedule time for the appropriate tests and consultation to discuss the treatment.*

## What’s New In Contact Lenses?

A new plastic recently became available which for many people provides a *vast improvement* in end-of-day comfort. They stay wet and comfortable all day long. Alcon Dailies Total 1 brand is available for nearsighted and farsighted optical corrections and is available as a multifocal for those who might normally use bifocal or progressive spectacle lenses.. Both Ann Owens, our office optician, and I use this new lens. Multifocal contact lenses allow people who need to use reading or computer eyeglasses over their contacts to see at all distances with ease. Multifocal lenses provide for a full range of vision and are available in daily and monthly replacement materials. Almost anyone over 45 years old who uses contact lenses should try these lenses.

A number of brand new lenses have recently been introduced by Bausch & Lomb, Coopervision, Alcon and Johnson & Johnson Vision. NaturalView multifocal is a totally new design and what we use for myopia control in children. It’s important to stay up-to-date with the latest in contact lens materials and technology. We have no al-

legiance to any one company, just to our patients. I want to make certain you get the best contact lens that suits your vision needs with long-term comfort and eye health in mind.

## Why Be Dilated?

As part of a regular eye examinations, the “dilated fundus exam” is important for an eye doctor to be able to visualize disorders of the retina (the very back of the eye) that cannot otherwise be seen. For some people this is a critical test. Diabetes can cause retinal blood vessels to leak and those can be detected and repaired hopefully before there is loss of vision. Symptoms of flashing lights or floaters might just be annoying age-related changes to the ocular structures or signs of an impending retina detachment. And here again, detecting this early on allows for treatment and preservation of your eyesight. Dilation, at least periodically is a good idea for most everyone, especially as we get older when there are increasing age-related risk factors and when early treatment can potentially save your vision. Contrary to popular misconceptions, your vision may not be significantly affected by the “drops”, but if you are concerned, please discuss this and perhaps arrange for the procedure to be done at a more convenient time or when you have someone to drive you home. If you have sunglasses, remember to bring them as you may be sensitive to bright light for a few hours. We will provide temporary, disposable dark shields if you don't have your sunglasses.



## Eyeglasses and Lenses

If you need to get eyeglasses, following your examination you will be provided with a copy of your optical prescription. You may choose to get that filled right here from our dispensary. Optician Ann Owens has acquired some great quality, fashionable frames for your new glasses. She can help you with styling and can guide you to the best lens designs for your specific visual requirements. Need something special not on display? She can help find something perfect! We utilize two of the most highly regarded optical laboratories in the USA to make your lenses. Carl Zeiss Optical and Hoya Optical. (Vision Plan patients may have to use plan-contracted labs to utilize benefits.) The labs do excellent, accurate work and your satisfaction is always guaranteed and important to us.

People who require different optics for their distance and near vision can choose to utilize two pairs of eyeglasses, one for each distance, bifocal lenses where the lens is divided into two sections, upper and a lower “window” for near, or progressive addition lenses (PAL). PALs have a continually variable focus which gradually changes from distance in the top, to mid-range optics in the middle and close-up vision toward the bottom. There are many PAL designs that work somewhat differently to achieve the desired results. We can customize these attributes to best suit your vision needs.

**Lens treatments:** Photochromic lenses are light-adaptive materials that change from clear to medium-dark tinted when exposed to sunlight and back to clear again inside. A popular brand name is Transitions, but there are other manufacturers as well. Consider them “comfort lenses” for people who experience variable light sensitivity. It should be noted that they do not darken sufficiently for some people to be useful as sunglasses, especially in your car (unless you have a convertible!)

**Scratch resistant coatings.** Almost all lenses come with this today although there are different levels of “hardness”, so some coatings protect your lenses better and for a longer time than other less expensive treatments.

**Anti-reflective coatings** consist of multiple microscopic layers of metallic oxides deposited onto the lens surface in a vacuum chamber. Each layer affects different wavelengths of light, the more layers there are, the more reflections that are neutralized. Some high-quality AR coatings have up to seven layers. As you might imagine, the effectiveness of these coatings as well as the costs can vary.

