

Staying Healthy

SUMMER 2016

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rainbow photos show what colorblind people see with (left) and without the EnChroma glasses, which enable them to see reds and greens.

Magic glasses

Colors amaze colorblind folks who don new spectacles

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Optometrist Michael Duong goes outside his office with patients (left to right) Paige Stirling-Cruz, Farhan Sareshwala and Adam Abbate as they try out EnChroma glasses at Optometric Center & Eyewear Galleria in San Ramon.

Farhan Sareshwala, a 23-year-old software developer from Pleasanton, didn't know he was colorblind until he was tested in school as a young teen.

"I just thought I was bad with colors," said Sareshwala, who attended Pleasanton Middle School and Foothill High. "I would mix them up, but I assumed I wasn't paying close enough attention."

He remembers being somewhat insulted when he was diagnosed and told he saw everything through a sort of "puke" filter.

Then recently he was fitted in San Ramon with EnChroma glasses, which improve color vision.

"When I tried the glasses on, I could see what they meant about the filter," Sareshwala said. "I had no idea what I was missing until I tried the glasses."

He began to enjoy going to grocery stores where he was surprised by the vivid colors.

"Bell peppers were a fun experience," he said. "The green was so much more bright, and the red ones were vibrant."

Colorblind people have trouble differentiating certain colors and shades of colors, which leads to a hard time coordinating their clothes, for instance, thinking a pink shirt is white. Foods may look gray and unappetizing; crosswalk signals may look white rather than orange.

After a friend of his read about the color-enhancing lenses, Sareshwala emailed the company offering to try them out, and EnChroma contacted him. He agreed to speak out on his experiences in exchange for a pair of glasses he received from optometrist Michael Duong at San Ramon's Optometric Center & Eyewear Galleria.

Duong said he has been practicing since 1989 and always was frustrated not to be able to help patients who were colorblind.

Colorblindness is caused when the red and green photo pigments of the eye overlap, Duong explained, so colors look the same. A primitive contact lens that separates the wave lengths of light could sometimes help a little.

But when Duong heard about the new technology being tested at UC Berkeley and UC Davis, he followed the clinical trials and was impressed with the science.

The breakthrough came about when Don McPherson,

who has a doctorate in glass science from Alfred University, noticed certain transformative properties on color appearance that resulted from lens formulas he had invented for laser surgery eye protection. He began to do more research with optical filters.

In 2010, McPherson teamed up with Andrew Schmeder to co-found EnChroma with the goal of developing these discoveries into something that could help colorblindness. EnChroma launched the first version of the lens in 2012, with a major update to the technology in late 2014 that made the product accepted by the professional eye care community.

"These glasses use a special filtering technology to help red/green colorblind people see more of the full spectrum of color," Duong said. "I contacted EnChroma about a year ago, and we had an open house event and had the community come in and learn about the condition."

"It's mostly men, and guys don't go to the doctor unless it hurts," he continued. "They don't know what they're missing until they come out here."

EnChroma glasses boost color vision, but they do not correct it 100% and it varies with each individual. The cost is from \$350-\$500 for the frame and lenses, which can incorporate other corrections as well.

"We have seen excellent results," Duong said. "It works 80% of the time. I have had patients come to tears in my office — it takes about 15 minutes for them to realize what they've seen. One kid, about 7 years old, was just, 'I see that color!'"

"This is a breakthrough, cutting-edge technology, and I am honored to be a part of this," he added.

For Sareshwala, the colorful change in his vision was immediate. He also noted that even when he is not wearing the glasses, he knows what things should look like so he sees things differently. People's faces are much rosier than he'd known before, he observed.

"I have a shirt I thought was blue for many years, but it is actually purple," he said. "But I still like it."

Sareshwala especially enjoys his walk to the BART station in Berkeley each morning.

"There are so many flowers — now I see why flowers are considered such beautiful things," he said. ■



GETTY IMAGES

Creating a community garden is a healthy way to get involved in the community.

5 simple ways you can create more healthy days

Fitness is more than what happens at the doctor's office

Creating more healthy days is easier than you may think. Contrary to popular belief, overall health is more than just being free of disease or chronic illness. Other factors, such as access to fresh foods, neighborhood walkability and public safety, to name a few, can help cultivate healthy days within your community.

Respondents to a survey conducted Jan. 8-18 by Aetna Foundation showed that local aspects have a large effect on residents' health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also acknowledges that a person's ZIP code is a good indicator of an individual's health and longevity. However, there are small, everyday steps you can take to make a big impact on your overall health.

Here are five easy tips to help increase your daily wellness:

Incorporate 30 minutes of exercise

Nearly 49% of Americans say they exercise to improve their overall health, according to the survey.

Getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day can help you feel more energized and aid you in maintaining a healthy weight. Participate in aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities by visiting your local community gym or recreational center to lift weights or take part in sports activities; ride your bike on a path close to your home; or go for a walk in your neighborhood park.

Drink more water and plan meals

Make sure that you're getting the recommended amount of fruits, vegetables and water each day.

Planning your meals ahead of time can help you incorporate healthier food options. Drinking water throughout the day instead of sugary sodas and juices helps your body regulate temperature, lubricates and cushions joints, protects the spinal cord and sensitive tissues, and

helps prevent weight creep.

In all, 73% of survey respondents said drinking plenty of water contributes to a healthy day.

Step away from small breaks

Your overall health also includes your emotional health and well-being. More than eight out of 10 Americans surveyed said their mood and stress level has an equal impact on their health as the food they consume.

Life can get busy and overwhelming, but simple acts like taking a few deep breathes, standing and stretching or taking a walk can help calm the mind and relieve stress. Having an understanding of what makes you at your best emotionally leads to better days at work or school.

Put your smartphone and body on sleep mode

The amount of sleep you get can have a direct impact on your mood and health; 64% of respondents said they need at least eight hours of sleep to have a healthy day.

Try to create a relaxing bedtime routine or develop a sleep schedule to help you get the best possible night's rest, including unplugging from electronics and devices an hour or more before bedtime.

Get involved

More than nine out of 10 Americans said they are willing to take action to create a healthier environment, according to the survey.

With a strong support system of friends and family, you can improve your health, help each other make healthier choices, and organize ways to stay on course, such as organizing a weekly walk, planning a neighborhood recycling contest, registering for a fitness event, signing up for a volunteer program, attending a community meeting or creating a local garden.

More than what happens in the doctor's office impacts your health. Incorporating these small changes can make a lasting difference. ■

—Family Features

Pregnant women most vulnerable to Zika virus

Prevention is key to stopping birth defects

By ANH DO, M.D., FACOG

More than 500 travel-associated cases of the Zika virus have come into the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and it is expected Zika will likely spread within the U.S. this summer. Now that a case of Zika virus has been found in Marin County, it is a good time to go over precautions for pregnant women in Pleasanton.

Zika virus is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito or through contact with an infected person's bodily fluids. Common symptoms of Zika include fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis (red eyes).

People often don't realize they have been infected because symptoms are usually mild and only last several days to a week. Rarely do people get sick enough to go to the hospital or die of Zika.

However, infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect called microcephaly, as well as other severe fetal brain defects. Once thought to be benign, damage from the virus includes more than 1,000 confirmed cases of microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects and has been linked to problems in infants, including eye defects, hearing loss and impaired growth.

Pregnant women are most vulnerable to the serious complications of the virus. We know that Zika can be passed from a pregnant woman to her fetus during pregnancy or at delivery. Therefore, it is most important that couples planning to conceive or women who are

pregnant take special precautions to protect themselves against it.

Here's what pregnant women can do to protect themselves:

- **Avoid travel to a Zika-infected area.**

The CDC recommends that women who are pregnant should not travel to any area where Zika virus is spreading.

Today that includes traveling to infected areas such as tropical Africa, parts of Central America and South America — particularly Brazil, Caribbean Islands and Mexico — and the Pacific Islands. If you must travel to one of these areas, talk to your doctor or other health care provider first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip.

- **Prevent mosquito bites.**

Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Stay in places with air conditioning and window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.

Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or para-menthane-diol.

Remove or stay away from mosquito breeding sites, like containers with standing water.

- **Prevent sexual transmission.**

Pregnant women with male sex partners who have lived in or traveled to an area with Zika virus should either use a condom every time they have sex or not have sex during the pregnancy. This includes vaginal, anal or oral sex.

If a pregnant woman is concerned

her male partner may have or had been infected with the Zika virus, she should talk to her doctor or other health care provider about her partner's travel history, including how long he stayed, whether or not he took steps to prevent getting mosquito bites, and if she had sex with him without a condom since his return.

Women trying to conceive and their male partners should talk to their doctor or other health care provider before traveling to areas with Zika. Because sexual transmission is possible, both men and women should strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip.

- **See a doctor or other health care provider.**

Women planning to conceive should also consult with their doctor regarding their travel plans. Pregnant women who have recently traveled to an area with Zika should talk to their doctor about their travel even if they don't feel sick. It is especially important that pregnant women seek medical attention if they develop a fever, rash, joint pain or red eyes during their trip or within two weeks after returning from an area where Zika has been reported.

There is currently no vaccine or medication to prevent Zika virus infection. We don't know how likely a woman who is exposed to Zika will get the virus or if her baby will have birth defects. Therefore, prevention is key. ■

—Dr. Anh Do is an obstetrician/gynecologist with the John Muir Health Pleasanton Outpatient Center.



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Keeping safe in the sun

Cover up, find shade, wear sunscreen are the keys

By WILLIAM LIDE, M.D.

Early summer is a vibrant time in the Bay Area.

Hiking, biking and outdoor sports are just a few of the ways you can enjoy this time of year. But one in five Americans will get skin cancer, so it is important to use preventive measures now to help protect yourself.

Living a life of total health also requires some simple precautions to ensure you are safe in the sun.

Cover up

If you burn easily, have a history of sunburns as a child, have had a previous skin cancer, have unusual spots or moles or have a family history of skin cancer, you might be at risk for skin cancer.

The good news is that more than 90% of skin cancers are curable. Talk to your doctor if you have any concerns about a non-healing lesion or a changing mole.

One of the best ways to be sun safe is to keep an eye on the clock. Avoid the sun when the rays are strongest, usually midday. Use your shadow as a measure. If it's shorter than your height, it's time to protect yourself from extended exposure.

If you're going to be in direct sunlight, it is essential to wear hats and other protective clothing. Find a hat that has ventilation and a full brim, preferably three inches, to protect your head, face, ears, and neck. Use sunglasses with UV protection for the eyes and surrounding skin.

There are many shirts vented for coolness, and designed for sun protection. Choose opaque long-sleeved shirts with a dense weave and pants.

Seek the shade

When you are outside, find trees, or other cool, shady spots — anywhere that doesn't directly expose your skin to the sun. This is a good method to use for picnics or any activities where you might be outside for several hours. Protecting your skin from the sun is also a good way to prevent wrinkles.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen is also important when keeping safe in the sun. Apply sunscreen to exposed areas like your face, arms and legs about 20 minutes before sun exposure. A typical 6-ounce sunscreen bottle should provide all-over, thorough applications of sunscreen six times.

Sun protection factor (SPF) rates how well sunscreen protects your skin against ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. A "broad-spectrum" sunscreen protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Choose broad-spectrum sunscreens that have 3% avobenzone, zinc or titanium dioxide in the list of ingredients.

Remember to reapply sunscreen after every 80 minutes of direct sun exposure, and after swimming, toweling dry or perspiring heavily. Sunscreen is a must, even on hazy or overcast days. ■

Dr. William Lide is a dermatologist at Kaiser Permanente in Pleasanton.



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