

That's Right! April Was Women's Eye Health and Safety Month

Norman Span wrote a song made famous by Harry Belafonte and others entitled "Man Smart, Woman Smarter". The opening lines are:

*Let us put men and women together
See which one is smarter
Some say men, but I say no
The women got the men like a puppet show*

While these lyrics may be true, most docs will tell you that men, including yours truly, tend to avoid doctor visits for a variety of reasons that fit mostly into the category of denial. No one would argue this approach to personal well being is smart. Women, the perennial care givers since the day they borrowed a rib, skip their visits for altogether different reasons. They are either too busy taking care of everyone else or finances and/or selflessness dictate that they will be the last served at the health care buffet. Well I've got a question for you ladies that is both self serving and in your best interest to consider: If you don't take care of yourselves in April and throughout the rest of the year, how do you expect to take care of the rest of us?

Fair or not, here are some facts that should make you contemplate a 'me first' attitude or at least a 'me too' approach. Over 35 million people on this planet of ours are blind and over two-thirds of those blind or visually impaired people are women. These global statistics hold up in the United States with over 700,000 of the roughly one million blind people being women. Of the 1.6 million people suffering with macular degeneration, one million of them are women. The numbers are skewed against females because women in the US tend to outlive men, but additionally women also seem to have a predisposition to certain conditions that result in visual impairment.

There are simple steps we all can take to maintain the health of our eyes. I am sure it comes as no surprise that overall health and eye health go hand and hand. Eating well and staying in shape are crucial. Maintaining an appropriate weight through proper diet is important, but cardiovascular health matters too and it can't be maintained through limiting caloric intake alone. Physical activity is the counterpart to proper nutrition and helps relieve stress too. We have all heard of the wonders of antioxidants and they play a valuable role in helping maintain eye health. Sunglasses with UV protection are another gift that keeps on giving and what can I say about smoking that hasn't already been said. Smoking is not only a killer, but it also increases the chances of getting certain eye diseases so give it up. Lastly, get your eyes checked at regular intervals. Most people should get an eye exam every couple of years, but if you have diabetes, you need to schedule annual visits. Ladies, I salute you and encourage you to do the same. Put yourself on your list of priorities this year.



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