Keep an eye on healthy vision habits

As we celebrate Save Your Vision month in March, it’s the perfect time to share tips on keeping your children’s eyes healthy and seeing for a very long time.

The best protection is to have regular eye exams, just like you schedule well checks and dentist appointments for your child. The American Optometric Association recommends that kids get comprehensive eye exams at age 3, before they enter first grade and then annually thereafter.

“Kids should have regular eye exams even if they don’t need glasses or aren’t complaining of any eye concerns,” said Dr. Casandra Solis, an optometrist at Akron Children’s Hospital. “Even if a child has had an eye exam in the past without any concerns, kids are growing every year and can develop eye issues or a need for glasses.”

Developing healthy habits now can help your child maintain healthy eyes and vision as they grow. Dr. Solis offers six healthy vision tips to keep kids’ eyesight at its best and hopefully avoid eye problems in the future.

1. **Eat right**: A balanced diet of foods rich in antioxidants and fatty acids – such as fresh fruits and vegetables and fish like salmon – is important for healthy eyes.

2. **Exercise**: Getting regular exercise can help keep kids at a healthy weight. Being overweight can put your child at a higher risk for developing diabetes, which can lead to vision problems.

3. **Keep germs at bay**: Whatever germs or viruses are on your kids’ hands can be transferred to their eyes when they touch them. Make sure your kids wash their hands regularly, especially before putting in their contacts.

4. **Gear up**: Kids should wear appropriate protective eyeglasses to prevent eye injuries while playing a sport, doing a science experiment or mowing the lawn.

5. **Wear sunglasses**: The sun’s ultraviolet rays can be harmful, so remind your kids that they should never look directly at the sun. Make sure your children wear sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays.

6. **Give eyes a break**: Staring too long at a TV or computer screen can cause kids not to blink as often, and they can end up with dry eyes. Tell kids to give their eyes a break by blinking frequently and using the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look about 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

*To schedule an appointment with Akron Children’s Vision Center, call 330-543-5290.*