

7 Things Pregnant Mums Need to Know About Eye Health

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It is not uncommon to hear about the blurred vision that some expectant mum experience and how the confinement nanny would say never to shed a tear during confinement or else you face blindness in when old. True or false? Find out about some pregnancy-related vision issues and care tips from Dr David Chan, Senior Consultant Ophthalmologist and Medical Director of Atlas Eye Specialist and Medical Director of Atlas Eye Specialist Centre. “Most eye problems relating to pregnancy are minor and typically settle when the pregnancy is over. However, there are **TWO** potentially serious conditions that warrant medical attention: pre-eclampsia and gestational diabetes,” says Dr Chan.

1 \ Pre-eclampsia: Marked by high blood pressure that affects between 5-8% of pregnancies, this can result in transient loss of vision, sensitivity to light, blurring of vision, auras and the sensation of seeing flashes of light. Mothers should seek medical attention urgently to rule out pre-eclampsia and prevent its complications, which include bleeding issues.

2 \ Gestational Diabetes: This condition may lead to the abnormal growth of retinal blood vessels, which may in turn rupture causing internal bleeding in the eye. It is important for the mother to work closely with her doctor in monitoring her blood sugar levels during her pregnancy. Both conditions are not infectious.

3 \ Red eyes, dry eyes and blurred vision: Pregnancy brings about many changes in hormonal levels, which lead to physical changes such as morning sickness and back pain. Many mothers to be are surprised to find that some physical changes can affect their eyes and vision. Fortunately, many of these changes are temporary and should settle after the pregnancy. However, there are some vision changes that require medical attention.

4 \ Eye vessels ‘bursting’ during pushing?: Exerting pressure during labour may result in a rupture of the blood vessels at the most superficial layer of the whites of the eye, known as a sub-conjunctival haemorrhage. It often takes on a patch bright red appearance. However, its appearance is worse than its consequences as most will resolve spontaneously with need for medical intervention. As with a bruise, the subconjunctival haemorrhage usually resolves gradually on its own within 1 to 2 weeks.

5 \ Eye infections: In all cases of eye infections, it would be best to seek the attention of the eye doctor to ascertain the severity of each eye infection. Certainly, many cases of conjunctivitis are viral and often times self-limiting (a process that resolves spontaneously with or without specific treatment). Occasionally though, the cause of red eyes may be due to other organisms that may cause more serious infections, which would require specialised eye medications.

6 \ Blindness caused by crying during confinement?: Not to worry. Crying in itself does not lead to blindness.

7 \ ‘Listen’ to your eyes: Your eyes tell you a lot about your health. Watch the video by Dr Elise Brisco on how your eyes are the windows to your health. Pink or red eyes can indicate arthritis, allergies, bacterial conjunctivitis, dry eyes, Herpes Simplex Keratitis, or an eye infection from contaminated make up. Learn health tips for using eye makeup and find out what you can do about your eye issues and below are also some natural health foods picks we got for you for better vision care.



Supplements for your eye health



a) Barbary Wolfberry Fruit, 500g, \$25.50, www.euyansang.com.sg b) Brand's Innershine Berry Essence 14's, \$26.90, www.fairprice.com.sg c) Essence of Chicken with Goji Berries and Red Dates 8's, \$21.90, www.euyansang.com.sg Share these tips with your friends and tell us what you would like to find out more. A version of this article appeared in the print edition of Singapore's Child March Issue 172 with the headline 'Pregnancy Eye Health' with expert advice from Dr David Chan, Senior Consultant Ophthalmologist and Medical Director of Atlas Eye Specialist and Medical Director of Atlas Eye Specialist Centre.



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