

A Quarterly Publication  
of The Eye Institute of  
The Pennsylvania College  
of Optometry



# Eyesight

Summer 2007 ■ Volume 1, Issue 2

## Reading and Vision:

- Reading requires the integration of several vision skills: visual acuity, visual fixation, accommodation, binocular fusion, convergence, field of vision and form perception.
- School screenings typically only check one the above vision skills. Only a comprehensive eye exam checks all of them.
- 1 in 4 children have vision problems that could affect their school performance.
- Undiagnosed vision problems make it difficult to read and affect a child's self-esteem.

## L.J. Smith Teams Up with The Eye Institute

Growing up as a typical child in a single parent household in South Jersey, L. J. Smith knew his chances of a college education were pretty slim. He considers himself fortunate to have turned his athleticism into a football scholarship to Rutgers University and ultimately into his career with the hometown Philadelphia Eagles. He values the education and life experiences gained at Rutgers.

Now he wants to use his good fortune to help

children in his community. So LJ has two new goals in mind; to establish a scholarship fund and to help children perform better in school.

Understanding the value of teamwork, LJ has joined with The Eye Institute to form a winning team.

Since studies have linked undiagnosed vision problems to poor performance in school, LJ has become the spokesman for The Eye Institute. His message: part of school readiness is to get a

comprehensive eye exam. The partnership between LJ and The Eye Institute can be summarized by the slogan: "See, Read, Succeed."

The Eye Institute will help L. J. grow his scholarship fund by donating a portion of the money collected from eyewear sales during football season to his scholarship fund.

So listen to L.J, make an appointment for your child at The Eye Institute today.

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## Allergic Conjunctivitis: What is it? What Can I do About it?

**Conjunctivitis is one of the most common and treatable eye conditions in children and adults. Often called “pink eye”, it is an inflammation of the conjunctiva, a clear, thin, membrane that covers the eyeball and lines the inside of the eyelids.**

Viruses, bacteria, irritating substances (for example, shampoo, dirt, smoke), or allergens (substances that cause allergies) can cause conjunctivitis. It is important to find out whether your pink eye is caused by allergies or infection, because each condition has different treatments.

### ***What is allergic conjunctivitis and what causes it?***

Allergic conjunctivitis is an allergic reaction on the surface of the eye. It is a very common condition that occurs when your eyes come in contact with allergy-causing substances (allergens). Pollen, grass and ragweed, animal skin (dander), and smoke are examples of allergens.

### ***What are the symptoms associated with allergic conjunctivitis?***

Symptoms of allergic conjunctivitis may include:

- swelling of the eyelid
- redness in the white of the eye or inner eyelid
- increased amounts of tears (watery eyes)
- itchy eyes
- blurred vision

### ***How Long do the Symptoms of Allergic Conjunctivitis Last?***

The symptoms will last as

long as the allergen is around, whether its spring pollen or cat dander in a carpet.

### ***Can I prevent Allergic Conjunctivitis?***

Often there is no way to prevent allergic conjunctivitis. You can try to lessen your symptoms by limiting your exposure to allergens. For example, avoid going outside when the pollen counts are highest or when the wind is blowing allergens through the air. Use air conditioning rather than opening windows.

### ***How is Allergic Conjunctivitis Treated?***

The best defense against allergic conjunctivitis is a good offense; try to avoid substances that trigger your allergies. Of course, in the case of pollen or animal dander, that may be impractical or impossible.

- There are a number of medicines that can provide symptomatic relief. They can help relieve itchy, watery eyes and may keep symptoms from returning. It is always preferable that an eye doctor make the most appropriate recommendation for the use of over-the-counter or prescription medicines.

• Besides topical eye drop treatments, there are additional ways to relieve the symptoms associated with allergic conjunctivitis. You can put cool compresses on your eyes several times a day to help relieve symptoms. You can also use artificial tear drops to both soothe the eyes and to wash away allergy-causing particles from the surface of the eye. (Ask your eye doctor to suggest an appropriate artificial tear drop.)

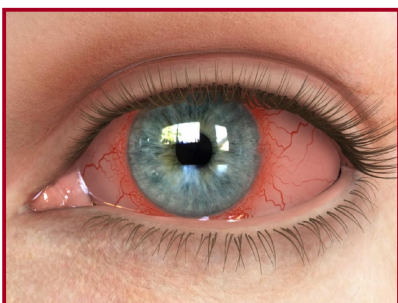
- Lastly, if you wear contact lenses, you should remove your lenses when your allergic symptoms are present.

Spring and summer can be a particularly difficult time for individuals who suffer from allergies due to the mold spores, dust, pollen, and other allergens that come with the season. Treating ocular allergy symptoms does not take a one-size-fits-all approach. There are many factors that go into getting the right treatment for your symptoms, furthermore, there are many different treatment approaches. However, finding the right treatment begins with the right diagnosis. The correct diagnosis begins with a visit to your eye doctor.



Normal Eye

***“It is important to find out whether your pink eye is caused by allergies or infection, because each condition has different treatments.”***



Inflamed Eye

## Product Feature: UV Protection

### Don't Underestimate the Importance of Quality Sunglasses



The illustrations above demonstrate the difference in clarity of various lens treatments, from the top down; Clear Lens, Tinted Lens, Polarized Lens and Polarized Lens with Anti-Reflective Coating.

Every day, whether it is sunny or cloudy, we are exposed to ultraviolet radiation (UV) from the sun. Most of the time we aren't even aware that we are being bombarded with potentially damaging radiation (light). Just as the sun can damage your skin it also can have damaging effects in the eye. There are two types of radiation in sunlight that affect the eye, UVA and UVB. UVA exposure affects the lens in the eye and has been linked to a greatly increased chance of cataract development (a clouding of the lens of the eye). UVB can cause severe damage to the retina. Furthermore, the damage from harmful UV radiation is cumulative over a person's lifetime. Because the damage is cumulative, it is important to protect your eyes every day, in all light conditions.

Sunglasses, with and without a prescription, that can block out nearly all UV light are now readily

available. Eyeglass lenses with UV blocking characteristics, protect the eyes and significantly reduce the chance of vision problems caused by sunlight.

Here are some important tips when considering lenses with UV protection (sunglasses):

- Look for sunglasses that block at least 99% of ultraviolet rays, both UVA and UVB.
- Lenses should be gray, green, or brown, and the larger the lenses, the better. Wrap-around sunglasses provide an extra measure of protection.
- The best sunglasses are those purchased from an optometrist or optician. This ensures the sunglasses have the appropriate amounts of filtering for both types of ultraviolet radiation (UV) and are the best protection for your eyes while in the sun.
- UV light from the sun is

harmful even in winter. Snowboarders and skiers should always wear tinted goggles, as UV light bounces off snow even on the cloudiest of days.

- Sunglasses purchased from a department store or a street vendor may not provide important UV protection. There is no assurance that eyewear, no matter how dark the lens, will protect against UV rays.
- Polarized sun lenses are excellent at providing glare free vision, enhanced contrast vision, 100% UV protection, outstanding color perception, and reducing eye fatigue resulting from bright light conditions from the sun

If you are planning to purchase sunglasses, make the kind of selection in sun wear and lenses that will reduce the uncomfortable glare of bright sunlight, while providing you with the UV protection so important to your ocular health. Ask our expert opticians in our eyewear center about the many lens options available for UV protection.

## Can't decide between the Fendi Sunglasses or the Gucci Transitions?

Present this coupon at any of the 3 Eye Institute locations and receive a 40% discount on the total price of a second pair of glasses with the purchase of first pair at regular price.

**So go ahead and treat yourself, get both!**

Offer Valid through October 31, 2007. Coupon must be presented at time of initial order. Limit one coupon per person. Cannot be combined with other sales, discounts, coupons, or promotional offers.

**40% Off  
2nd pair**

**40% Off  
2nd pair**

## Visual Processing - Keys to Learning

Richard, a 10-year old, 5th grader has the ability to be an above average student, but he is struggling just to maintain average grades. As a parent you try to figure out what could be wrong, and you notice that Richard is easily distracted. He almost never completes in-class silent reading assignments and consequently does poorly on answering the follow-up questions. On homework, if the task is creative writing, he does well. But if he has to read for understanding, he seems lost. Watching more closely, you also notice that Richard often rubs his eyes when he's reading. Sometimes he complains that he has a headache or tired eyes. Richard's behavior is characteristic of a child with an undetected vision problem. And there are many Richards. Experts estimate that 20% to 25% of school-age children have vision problems significant enough to interfere with academic performance. For children with learning problems, the figures are as high as 30% to 60%. And many of these

children have passed the annual school vision screening with flying colors.

Does your child have an undetected vision problem? The charts on this page may help you discover why your child is struggling. If your child has some of these symptoms, make sure he or she gets tested by a professional that specializes in children's vision as soon as possible. Help that could dramatically improve his school performance is available.

### Vision and Learning

Most people think that a child who has passed the annual school vision screening has "good vision" and can see the board and his textbooks clearly. Unfortunately, this is a serious misconception because the traditional school eye exam doesn't test aspects of vision required for reading. And sadly, the perception that everything's okay can mask significant learning-related vision problems.

The key to understanding the relationship between vision and learning is realizing that vision is

more than just being able to see the smallest letters on a vision chart. Visual problems can be divided into two broad categories – the ability to gather information through the eyes, and visual processing.

### Treatment

A full evaluation by a professional who has the expertise to test for both types of vision problems is the only way to detect some vision disorders. When one of these hidden problems does exist, treatment involving eyeglasses, vision therapy, or both can correct it.

The education and clinical training of pediatric optometrists stresses both eye health and eye function. This makes them uniquely qualified to detect and treat vision problems that interfere with school performance. All of the optometrists in the Pediatric Service of the Eye Institute are well-qualified to treat learning-related vision problems.

As your child heads back to school, it is important to insure that there are no learning related vision problems that could interfere with his or her progress in school.



### COMMON SYMPTOMS OF LEARNING RELATED VISION PROBLEMS

#### Problems with the Ability to Gather Information Through the Eyes

- Is inattentive
- Complains of blurred vision
- Closes or covers one eye
- Loses place
- Skips lines when reading
- Has headaches when reading
- Is tired at the end of the day
- Uses finger to keep place

#### Visual Processing Problems

- Reverses letters and words
- Mistakes words with similar beginnings
- Can't recognize the same word repeated on a page
- Has poor comprehension skills
- Has trouble with spelling and with sight vocabulary
- Has poor copying skills
- Erases excessively
- Seems to know material but does poorly on tests

To make an appointment with one of our pediatric doctors; call 215-276-6111.



## Spotlight On... Jeffrey Nyman, OD

Dr. Jeffrey S. Nyman has been on the teaching faculty at The Eye Institute for over 30 years. During his many years in practice, Dr. Nyman has taken care of the visual and ocular health problems of thousands of patients. Even after so many years, he still remains passionate about caring for the visual needs of his patients' eye problems and mentoring future eye doctors. "I am proud to be a member of The Eye Institute's team of providers. The quality of care that one gets at TEI is the best available anywhere in the city."

One of Dr. Nyman's many responsibilities at The Eye Institute is the Emergency Eye Care Service. Patients who come to The Eye Institute for emergency eye care come for many different types of problems, some serious, others not so serious. "The Eye Institute's Emergency Service provides a great service to our community," states Dr. Nyman. "Having a walk-in service for acute eye problems is a great benefit to the patients we

serve. Without this service, the patient care would be delayed, perhaps resulting in more serious problems for the patients." Some of the eye emergencies are caused by trauma: a fist to the eye, a misguided stone hurled in a playground, or an accidental finger poke from a child, to name a few. Other patients who come to the emergency service have red eyes which are related to infections.

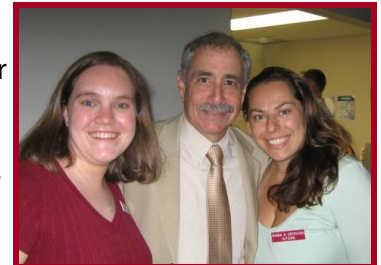
During the spring and summer seasons, many patients come to The Eye Institute because they are suffering with red, itchy eyes caused by seasonal allergies (allergic conjunctivitis).

Doctors who treat allergic conjunctivitis often have to get involved with detective work, according to Dr. Nyman. The doctor's goal is to try to identify what substance (allergen) is causing the allergic red eye. "If you can identify and remove the allergy causing agent, then you are well on your way to effectively treating the condition." Removing the agent, however, is a lot easier said than done. Dr.

Nyman reminds us that some of the most common causes for allergic eye problems include pollen, dust, pet dander, and other air-borne chemicals that may bombard a person's environment. Nyman says, "It may be virtually impossible to remove these substances from a patient's environment. Most often, patients must rely on both over-the-counter treatments and prescription drugs for symptomatic relief. Sometimes the allergy is so severe that a combination of treatments is needed before the patient is back to normal." Dr. Nyman is quick to add that in recent years several excellent topical prescription eye drops have become available for the treatment of allergic red eyes.

"Patients no longer have to suffer with the itchy watery, red eyes associated with seasonal allergy. A quick trip to your eye doctor will lead to the correct diagnosis and treatment plan."

Dr. Nyman is a graduate of McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and the New England College of Optometry in Boston, MA.



Dr. Jeffrey Nyman (center) poses with Optometry Students

***"I am proud to be a member of The Eye Institute's team of providers. The quality of care that one gets at TEI is the best available anywhere in the city."***

-Dr. Jeffrey Nyman  
Executive Director, TEI

## Acknowledgements

The Eye Institute would like to acknowledge the generous support of Alcon Laboratories in the production of this newsletter.

Alcon's mission is "To

discover, develop, produce, and market innovative, high quality eye care products that preserve, restore, and enhance vision." For more information, visit their website at:

[www.alcon.com](http://www.alcon.com).

Also the following sources were used in the information published herein:

National Eye Health Program/National Institutes of Health  
Eyemaginations, Inc.

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**The Eye Institute**  
1200 West Godfrey Ave  
Philadelphia, PA 19141

**The Eye Institute**  
At Mount Airy  
7145 Germantown Ave  
Philadelphia, PA 19119

**The Eye Institute**  
At Strawberry Mansion  
2800 West Dauphin Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19132

**Main: 215-276-6000**

**Appointments: 215-276-6111**

## Special Visitor to The Eye Institute

This January, The Eye Institute provided a complimentary vision exam to a very special visitor from Kenya. The visitor was a delightful 11-year-old named Mungai. Mungai lives at the Nyumbani Children's Home near Nairobi, Kenya. Nyumbani is the first children's home in Africa to provide a home, healthcare and educational services to more than 100 HIV-positive orphans. The home was founded in 1992 by Fr. Angelo D'Agostino after he learned that no orphanages in Africa would accept children that were HIV-positive. An active, friendly and

curious preteen, Mungai grew up with normal speech and hearing and was deafened secondary to meningitis in 2004. Tomi Browne, an Audiology Instructor for the Pennsylvania Ear Institute, organized efforts to get Mungai the help that he could not get in sub-Saharan Africa. Through her non-profit organization, Heart of the Village, Inc., Tomi Browne helped sponsor cochlear implant surgery. The surgery, which took place in January 2007 in Philadelphia, provided a state-of-the-art prosthetic device that will enable young Mungai to

participate fully in the hearing world.

Mungai visited The Eye Institute shortly after his surgery while he was still becoming accustomed to hearing sounds again. He was able to communicate by using sign-language, English spoken words and his extremely expressive facial gestures. All of this was more impressive since English is his 3<sup>rd</sup> language after his tribal language and native Swahili. To learn more about Mungai, Nyumbani and their wonderful projects, please visit their website at [www.heartofthevillage.org](http://www.heartofthevillage.org).



**Mungai hams it up with Tomi Browne (left) and TEI Pediatric Resident, Ruth Shoge (right)**

**To Schedule a Hearing  
Evaluation for yourself;  
contact the  
Pennsylvania Ear  
Institute at 215-886-8660**