MINIMIZING EYE STRAIN

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Eyestrain is a growing concern for many County employees and has become more common in recent years with the widespread use of computers. Common symptoms of eyestrain include headaches, irritated, dry or burning eyes, blurred vision, occasional doubling of vision, changes in color perception and slow refocusing when looking from the computer screen to distant objects.

The following tips and practices are recommended to prevent or minimize eyestrain while working with computers:

Lighting and Glare

- Position the monitor so direct light is not in the user's eyes.
- Adjust the angle of the monitor so the screen is perpendicular to the floor (reducing glare from overhead lighting).
- Position the monitor at a right angle to exterior windows.
- Use blinds or curtains over windows that create glare.
- Use glare screens if the source of glare cannot be controlled.

Display Characteristics

- Adjust the screen brightness and contrast so character definition and resolution are maximized.
- Use dark characters on light backgrounds (i.e. black characters on a white background).
- Increase the font size (if possible).

Work Practices

- Position the monitor so the screen is 18 to 30 inches away from the user.
- Place documents at the same distance as the computer screen.
- Alternate work to allow brief periods away from the computer.
- Take frequent "microbreaks". During a "microbreak", the user should focus on distant objects (20 feet away) for at least 20 seconds every 20 minutes.
- Blink often – computer users blink less when concentrating on the computer screen.

If eyestrain continues to be a problem after the above-mentioned tips and practices have been implemented, a comprehensive eye examination by a physician is recommended to assist in determining the cause of the eyestrain so additional measures can be taken.