

Eye Care / God's View

Carol: Well, Tammy, I just had my eyes checked and I am happy to say, everything is normal.

Tammy: Why did you have them checked? Did you think something was wrong?

Carol: No. It was a routine visit. I wear glasses for reading and working on my computer and I just wanted to make sure that everything is okay , you know?

Tammy: I do! Being able to see well, is so important. We all have eyes. And we do need to take care of them.

Carol: Welcome to *Women of Hope*. I'm Carol and Tammy and I are happy to be with you and welcome a special guest.

Tammy: That's right! You might remember our friend Dr Kerryn. She's here with us today to talk about our eyes. Welcome Kerryn.

Dr Kerryn: Thanks Tammy...and hello...

Carol: Kerryn, before we ask you to tell us about our eyes, why don't you tell us a little something about yourself.

Dr Kerryn: Sure – what would you like to know?

Carol: Let's start with your family. You have a family, don't you!

Dr Kerryn: Yes, I've been married for 11 years now and we have two young children. I grew up in Australia, and England and India, where my father was a missionary doctor.

Carol: And you've been a doctor too for quite a while now, haven't you?

Dr Kerryn: Yes...for about 12 years. I'm a GP – a general practitioner – but I have special skills and experience in women's health.

Carol: And where do you work?

Dr Kerryn: In Australia. Firstly, I worked in Melbourne, which is in the south of Australia, then moved to Darwin, right up in the north of Australia. I worked in the city and in remote areas, and in medical education. And my medical patients have been Aussies, Asians and aboriginal people, too.

Carol: You lived nearby where I live in North Carolina in America for a while, didn't you!

Dr Kerryn: Yes, that's right. We spent 6 months there a couple of years ago and then we lived in England and we returned to Australia this year.

Carol: So where do you work now?

Dr Kerryn: Back in the northern territory in Darwin, but I travel out to a remote Australian aboriginal community a couple of days a week.

Tammy: I enjoyed getting to know a little more about you Dr Kerryn. Today we'd like to ask you some questions about our eyes and how to take care of them. I have heard it said that, 'The eyes are the window of the soul.' You can see what a person is like by looking in their eyes.

Dr Kerryn: That's very true and they're also the window to the *body*, so it's very important to know how to keep your eyes healthy. I hope you can hear me well today, even if you can't see me with your beautiful eyes.

Tammy: So what do we need to know about our eyes?

Dr Kerryn: Let's think about how to keep keep *each part* of the eye as healthy as we can. Our eyes have many parts so let's think about the surface of the eye first. It's very important to keep the surface clean.

Wash your face and hands at least twice a day – and especially your children's faces. If you live in a dry, dusty place, or there are lots of flies, this is very important to stop germs that may be spread by the dust, or the flies from getting into your eyes. These germs like the warm moist place in the eyes. An infection – a common one is trachoma - can easily develop on the outside of the eye...if not treated properly these can lead to complete blindness.

Usually an outer eye infection will make your eye red and itchy and pus might appear in the corner of your eye. If you have an eye infection for more than a few days, see your health care worker to check whether you need antibiotics.

If you have any problem with your eyes that causes intense pain or redness...or changes to your vision, then go to your doctor or health care worker to examine your eyes.

Carol: So it is very important to keep our eyes clean.

Dr Kerryn: Definitely. And we should protect our eyes from injury, too. If you, or your husband, work where something might get into your eye, wear protective eye goggles or a shield. It is especially important when you're working with wood, or dangerous chemicals or grinding metals, or using equipment that can cause flash burns. It's much harder to treat an injured eye than to protect it! And teach your children not to play with sticks as this is a very common cause of childhood eye injury.

Tammy: Now, I've heard that if you get something in your eye you should not leave it there or it could damage your eye.

Dr Kerryn: It depends what's in your eye. If there's a bit of dust or an eyelash, don't rub your eye. Close your eye gently and just hold your eye closed - but don't let the eyelid rub hard against the eye. Then the tears that your eye produces might wash the dust or eyelash away. If this doesn't work, you can try washing your eye with cool clean water. But if it keeps irritating your eye, it may be something that won't flush out, or there may be a small injury to your eye and you need your health care worker to take a look at it.

If you have an injury with chemicals or burns, you need to wash the eye with cool clean water again and again and again and again - in fact keep doing this until you can get to a health care worker.

Eye injury can be very painful, but resting it will help. If you think your eye has been injured, your health care worker should check the eye as soon as possible.

Tammy: On Women of Hope today, Dr Kerryn is talking with us about taking care of our eyes. We've talked about caring for the outside of our eyes. What's next Dr Kerryn?

Dr Kerryn: The lens and the fluid inside. If you look at your eye in a mirror, you'll see a black hole in the middle of your eye - that's the lens. If you live in a sunny place, the sun can cause damage to the lens of your eye. So wear a broad-brimmed hat or shade your face with a scarf. You may have sunglasses to wear too, but make sure they're good ones. Bad sunglasses can actually make things worse, so avoid any glasses that don't completely cover your eyes and shade the sides. The best are glasses with protection against ultraviolet light. In fact, it's better not to use any glasses than to use bad glasses. Don't just wear any glasses to look fashionable!

Sunglasses also protect against damage that can lead to a condition called *glaucoma* – an increase in pressure in the eye. The eye is like a ball filled with water and if the pressure of the water in the eye is too strong, it can cause problems.

If you have family members who've had this problem, it's good to get your eyes checked by an optometrist every couple of years if you can, to see what your eye pressure is. There is easy treatment for this problem. But if it's left untreated it can cause blindness.

Carol: This is one of the reasons I have my eyes checked regularly. Tell us, how do we know if we have increased pressure in our eyes?

Dr Kerryn: The trouble is – we often don't. In the early stages, there are no symptoms. Anyone can get glaucoma, but some people have a higher risk...those with a family history of glaucoma...or if you suffer from diabetes or migraine...or if you've had eye injuries or have high blood pressure - have your eyes checked. Talk to your health care worker about how frequently you should have your eyes checked.

Tammy: So we've talked about the outside of the eye; the lens and the fluid inside. What else is there?

Dr Kerryn: There's the back of the eye – that's behind your eyes where there are nerves and blood vessels that go to the brain, so it can work out what your eyes are seeing.

The back of the eyes is complicated! There are a few things we can do to keep this part healthy. The first one is to eat food rich in Vit A.

Carol: Oh,I know about those – all those lovely yellow colored vegetables like carrots, sweet potato, and pumpkin...

Tammy: ...and the green leafy ones – like spinach, kale or bok choy. The stronger the color of your food the better.

Dr Kerryn: My favourite one to remember is pawpaw or papaya – it is so easy to grow in the tropics and tastes so great! Especially with a splash of lime to give you some Vitamin C! Foods rich in vitamin A are not only good for your eyes, they're good for making your bones strong, and keeping your immune system strong to fight disease. The other one that's good to eat if you can, is a little red meat.

If you don't have enough vitamin A in your body, the first sign is that it's more difficult to see at night - "night blindness". After this other problems develop and can eventually lead to complete blindness. Children are especially at danger of this. So don't forget the yellow and green foods and if you or your children have problems seeing at night get some Vitamin A drops from your health care worker.

If you have problems with your circulation – your blood flow – this can affect the retina, at the back on the inside of your eye, or the parts of your brain to do with sight. You may have little strokes due to blood clots in the back of the eye or in your brain. These are more common if you smoke, if you have high blood pressure, or high sugar in your blood...or if you have high cholesterol in your blood. So for good circulation, here are some tips: one don't smoke, two keep a healthy weight, three eat healthy foods that are low in sugar and fat. Four Eat lots of fruit and vegetables and five keep active with exercise, like walking, bicycle riding, or digging in the garden. These will also mean a healthy heart, lungs, brain and kidneys. Well, really, a healthy you!

Carol: Thanks Dr Kerryn. This was very important.

Tammy: Do you remember all the things we need to do to keep our eyes healthy?

Carol: Let's remember them together. First, wash your face and hands at least twice a day. Get eye infections treated if they do not get better within a few days. And protect your eyes when working with anything that might fly up into your eyes.

Tammy: Teach your children not to play with sticks. Avoid sun damage - wear a hat or a scarf or good sunglasses if you can.

Carol: Eat foods rich with vitamin A – all those bright yellow and orange foods...

Tammy: ...and the green leafy ones.

Dr Kerryn: Don't smoke...and take your medicines for blood pressure, diabetes or cholesterol problems. Keep a healthy weight, eat healthy foods, and keep active. Goodbye, I'll come and talk with you again soon about your health.

Carol: Now, my friend, I have a special question for you. Have you ever seen an eagle? Tammy, how about you. Have you seen an eagle?

Tammy: Oh Carol, I have, down in the area in Florida where I grew up. They were protected. We had them everywhere. They're such beautiful birds.

Carol: I have seen them flying free and I saw one at the zoo and I agree, they're very beautiful! But it made me feel sad that it didn't have much room to fly!

Well, today, our friend, Laura is here to tell us a story about this beautiful bird, the eagle. Let's listen together. She's called her story "The Eye of an Eagle". Welcome Laura.

Laura: Thank you.

Hello my friend. Last summer I was traveling by boat down a large river. The sky was clear and the air was cool. There were large trees and beautiful mountains everywhere along the river. Off in the distance I saw a bird - a huge bird. As it came closer I was very surprised to see how large and powerful it was. Each wing easily stretched out to almost 3 feet (or a metre). The bird was an American Bald Eagle. I watched that magnificent bird fly high up in the sky - floating effortlessly through the air, past the tops of trees that reached beyond the clouds. The bird was not only powerful, it flew free with nothing to hold it back. It seemed to have no fear.

Did you know that an eagle's vision is so sharp that it can see a rabbit from about about 4 kilometres away? An eagle can also see a fish in the ocean from about 2 kilometres away! That means an eagle can see many times better than a person with perfect vision. An eagle's eye is made differently from a human's eye. It can see an object close up, and another object far away at the *same time*! That's quite amazing, isn't it?

I'm reaching a time in my life when I don't see as well as I used to. My eyes are not so young any more! How about you? How well do you see? When I read or write I must put on glasses. Some people need to wear glasses all the time to see long distances as well as close up. Some people never need the help of glasses. But no person has the ability to see far distances like an eagle.

Now, just as our vision, or eyesight, is limited, so it is with our circumstances, - the things that happen to us each day. We can only see what's happening in our lives at the present moment. We can't see into the future. We don't know what will happen tomorrow or even how our circumstances will affect our lives or the lives of others.

Now, if we wanted to predict the future, would it help if we put on very strong glasses? Would that help us see better? No! What if we found the biggest and most sophisticated telescope and could see for thousands of miles. Some people use a telescope to see the stars. Would that telescope help us to see how our circumstances today will affect our life and the lives of our family...even a few days from now? No! So what can we do? Is the solution to visit a psychic or a fortune teller to help us know the future? No! The Bible says in Jeremiah 27:9 - "Do not listen to sorcerers who speak the future for they prophesy a lie to you". It is not our job to know the future. That's God's business.

God who created the universe, who holds all things in place, knows us perfectly and he knows us personally. He knows our past, our present and our future. We've heard about the apostle Paul before; God guided him to write these words in the Bible: "All things were created by God - both in the heavens and on earth. God created the things we see and the things we cannot see". It goes on

to say: "God existed before all things and in him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:16-17) This means that God knows everything! He knows what happens to us each day and what will happen to us ten years from now. God's focus on our lives is much clearer and sharper than we can imagine! God has a purpose for our lives, and he also has the power to get us there.

Long ago, Jeremiah, the prophet spoke for God when he said: "I know the plans that I have for you," says the Lord, "plans for your good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11 NLT)

We can only see what is going on right now in our lives, and in the lives of our family and friends. God not only sees into the future, he *plans* our future to fit *our* needs and *his* purpose.

The challenge for us is not to try to see into our future, but to trust God with each day. We are *not* to try to predict the future or arrange the lives of others as we think best. We are also *not* to worry and fret about our lives. The prophet Isaiah wrote: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31) God's word, the Bible, is saying that our vision, our strength and our abilities are not good enough to help us survive in life, we need to trust in God, in his strength, in what he sees and knows, and not try to manage things by ourselves.

Let's pray to God and ask for his help.

Dear Lord, Thank you for being the Light of the world, for we do not see well! Help my friend to spend less time trying to control her circumstances and more time trusting you. Open her eyes to see who you really are. Guide her in all that she does and says. And may she trust you with her life circumstances. In the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen!

Carol: You know, sometimes I find myself wishing I could see what God sees, but you know, I think I am glad he only lets me see just what is right in front of me.

Tammy: I agree! If I could see too far ahead I may be afraid of what's going to happen. Maybe I would make wrong decisions based on what I *think* might happen.

Carol: Friend, we care about you. Did you know that God, who created everything, the one who sees everything, knows your name? It amazes me, every time I think about it - but I am so glad he does. He knows us and he cares for us.

We would love to hear from you if you want to know more about trusting God for your future. You can contact us in care of this station or at Women of Hope.

Tammy The email address is TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. That's TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. Or if you have missed a program or would like to hear one again visit our website, TWRWomenofHope.org or visit us on our Facebook page.

Carol: As you go through your week, my friend, I hope you can remember this thought...God's word says: "All things were created by God - both in the heavens and on earth. God created all things we can see and all things we cannot see". (Colossians 1:16 & 17). This encourages me because God sees the future; he sees the past; and he holds today in his hands. I hope you will trust God in everything you do this week.

Tammy: We do hope you will be with us again. Have a great week filled with God's blessings.

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