



Focused inSights

Dry Eye and Digital Eye Strain

Common Symptoms, Missing Care:
Why Everyday Eye Strain Goes Undiagnosed and Undertreated

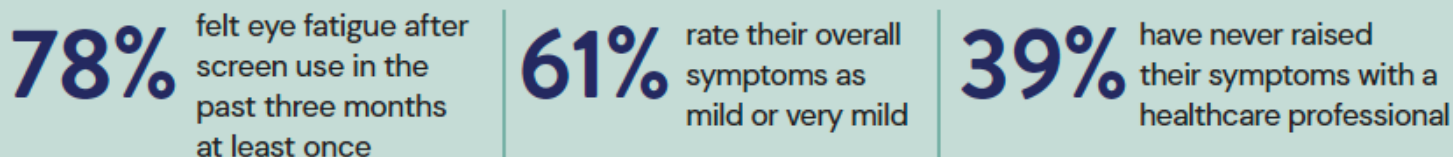
Survey of 1,089 U.S. adults in April 2026 exploring awareness, symptoms, treatments, and purchasing behaviors related to dry eye and digital eye strain.



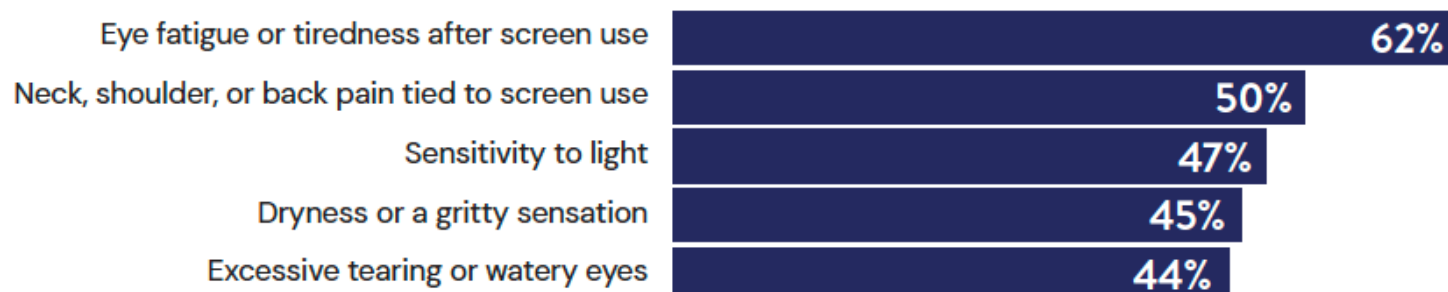
AT A GLANCE

What to Know About Living with Dry Eye and Digital Eye Strain

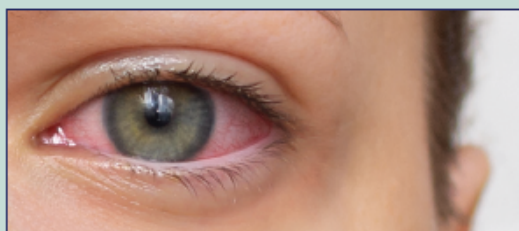
The Vision Council surveyed 1,089 Americans about their eye symptoms. Here's what they told us.



The Symptoms Consumers Feel Most (experienced at least sometimes)



The Knowledge Gap



- **63%** have little or no knowledge of digital eye strain
- **50%** have little or no knowledge of dry eye disease
- Only **12%** have ever been diagnosed with digital eye strain; **24%** with dry eye disease

How They Manage Their Symptoms



39% use over-the-counter artificial tears; 25% rely on "night" or "dark mode" on their devices



Just 12% have used prescription eye drops, and fewer than 1 in 20 have tried specialized contact lenses, punctal plugs, or IPL therapy



21% do nothing at all

The Takeaway

The consumers in this survey are largely managing their eye symptoms without diagnoses or professional guidance. More frequent conversations in the exam room may be the best opportunity to change outcomes for those with symptoms of eye strain and dry eye.

Sound Familiar? Here's What To Know. Tired, dry, gritty, or watery eyes after screen time are not simply the price of modern life. They are common signs of digital eye strain and dry eye disease, conditions an eyecare professional can diagnose and treat. If you reach for drops most days, or your symptoms keep coming back, mention them at your next eye exam.

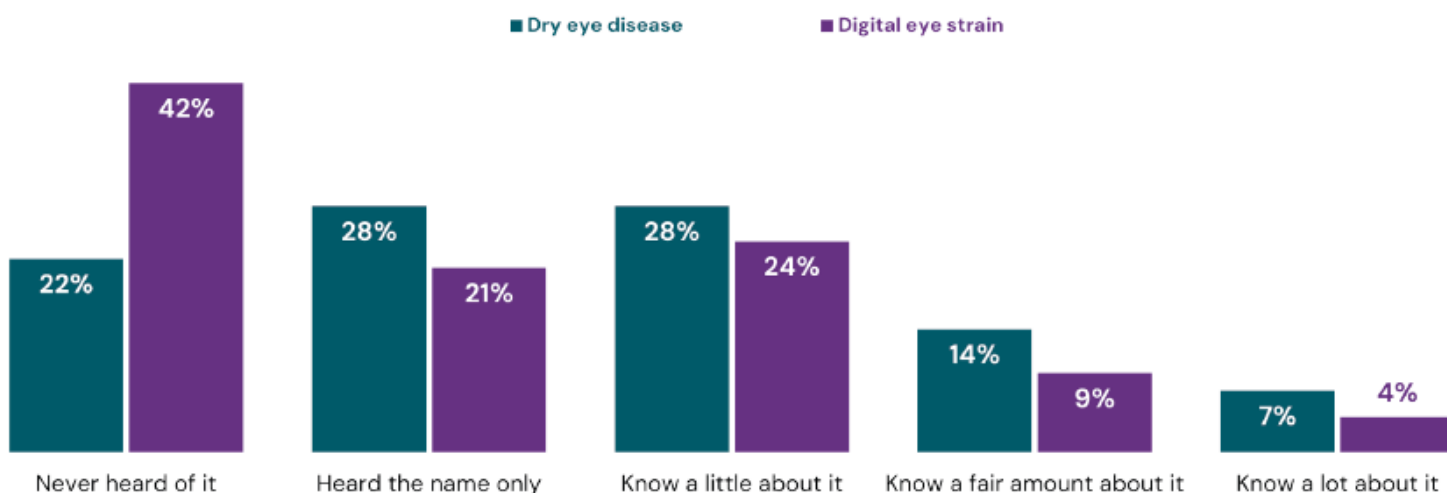


The Conditions Behind the Symptoms Go Unnamed

63% of respondents have little or no knowledge of digital eye strain, even as they report symptoms.

Compared to the amount of people who report symptoms, much fewer report having a strong understanding of the conditions themselves. 42% of respondents have never heard of digital eye strain, and a further 21% only know it by name, leaving 63% with effectively no knowledge of the condition whose symptoms they experience regularly. Only 13% know a fair amount or a lot about it. Dry eye disease fares somewhat better, but half of respondents still have little or no knowledge of it, and only 21% know it well.

Knowledge about dry eye disease and digital eye strain



How much have you heard about the following conditions? n = 1089

This knowledge gap between lived experience and understanding that re-occurring symptoms can be a part of a serious medical condition shapes everything downstream. Having symptoms but not understanding that they may be due to a larger condition offers no reason to expect that targeted and effective treatment exists.

IMPLICATION FOR MARKET EDUCATION

Lead with symptoms, not terminology. Campaigns built around clinical names will miss the majority of consumers who have never heard of them. Communications that open with the felt experience: eyes that are tired, dry, gritty, or watery after screen time, and then attach a name, a diagnosis, and a treatability message are better positioned to convert recognition into action.