MJO NEWSLETTER

November 2025

Melina Joy Opticians
& Hearing Care

"Heathfield has a fantastic high street!"

That's what I hear from so many of our customers. Perhaps due to what we do we have a fair few clients who travel from near and far and nearly all of them comment on how varied and useful our high street is.

"You really can get anything and everything you need!" From picture framing to pet food, beauty treatments to birthday cards, shoes to spectacles there is something for everyone. In fact, we often find that whilst one person is in for an eye exam the 50 minutes we allow gives their partner a great opportunity to shop! They often return swinging a fancy bag from No.37, a box from Sue's Shoes or a basket full of luxurious cheeses from Cucolo!

Did you know Heathfield has its own loyalty card? It's organised by the Heathfield Chamber of Commerce, with a monthly prize draw of £50. There are 26 participating shops around the town.

Christmas in Heathfield
Friday 21st November
From 3.45pm

Think. Heathfield
Small town, great choice

This month, Heathfield has a Christmas Lights evening event, a visit from Father Christmas, singing from the local primary schools, a lot of the shops will be open for late night shopping and serving refreshments.

We will be open until 6.30pm and serving warm mulled wine so please pop in and join us as we celebrate not only Christmas but our first year of trading without Melina at the helm!

Catriona

Do you have dry eyes?

What is dry eye?
Dry eye is an eye condition caused by a problem with tears. Dry eye can make your eye feel uncomfortable, red, scratchy and irritated. Despite the name, having dry eye can also make your eyes watery. Typically, dry eye doesn't cause a permanent change in your vision. It can make your eyesight blurry for short periods of time, but the blurriness will go away on its own or improve when you blink.

Normally, dry eye affects both eyes but sometimes one eye is affected more than the other. Sometimes dry eye can make it feel like you've got something in your eye such as an eyelash or a piece of grit, even when there is nothing there.

Why have I developed dry eye?
Dry eye is caused by a problem with your tears. You may develop dry eye if you don't produce enough tears, your tears aren't of the right quality, your tears aren't spread across the front of your eye properly.
Dry eye is usually more common as people get older. As we age, our eyelids aren't as good at spreading tears each time we blink. The various glands in our eyes that produce tears may also become less effective. Essentially, the quality of something known as your tear film gets worse.

What are the causes of dry eye?
While dry eye can occur at any age, it is more common in women, especially after the menopause. Changes in hormonal levels such as in pregnancy and menopause can contribute to dry eye. The following can also affect your tear film and contribute to dry eye:

Blepharitis and Meibomian gland dysfunction
Blepharitis and Meibomian gland dysfunction (MGD) are both very common causes of dry eye. Blepharitis is an inflammation of the eyelids and can sometimes be caused by a bacterial infection. It can be divided into two types based on the location: Anterior blepharitis is when the inflammation is primarily around the lashes and in front of the lid margin. Posterior blepharitis is when there is inflammation present behind the lid margin and is often caused by MGD.

What is the treatment for dry eye?
Once your optometrist has confirmed you have dry eye, they will discuss what can be done to help you. You cannot cure dry eye but there are some treatments that can help your eyes feel more comfortable. If your dry eye is caused by medication, then your GP may consider switching your medication to another. If your dry eye is caused by wearing contact lenses, then having a break from your lenses may help the dry eye to improve.

Often dry eye is caused by getting older, which can't be helped, but there is treatment that can help with your symptoms. There are three main ways to help your dry eye: making the most of your natural tears, using artificial tears (eye drops) and reducing the draining away of the tears. Call us to discuss your symptoms on 01435 868181.

Makeup and Eye Health

The Hidden Risk

The festive season is a time to celebrate, and for many of us, that means adding a touch of glamour to our look. However, opticians often see an increase in patients with red, irritated or infected eyes during this time of year. A common and often overlooked cause is the use of expired or improperly stored eye makeup.

Cosmetic products, especially those used around the eyes, contain preservatives that inhibit the growth of bacteria and fungi. Over time, these preservatives lose their effectiveness. Once they are opened these products are exposed to air, moisture and the natural bacteria on our skin and lashes, creating an environment where microorganisms can thrive.
When contaminated makeup is applied close to the eye, bacteria and fungi can be transferred directly onto the eyelids, conjunctiva, and tear film. This can lead to a range of ocular conditions including:

- Bacterial conjunctivitis – causing redness, discharge, and irritation.
- Blepharitis – inflammation of the eyelid margins.
- Styes (hordeolum) – painful, swollen lumps due to blocked or infected glands.
- Keratitis – inflammation or infection of the cornea, which can be sight-threatening in severe cases.

Cosmetic products display a "PAO" (Period After Opening) symbol — a small jar icon with a number (e.g., 6M for six months). This indicates how long the product remains safe to use once opened. As a rule of thumb:

- Mascara: 3 months
- Liquid eyeliner: 3 to 6 months
- Cream eyeshadow: 6 months
- Powder eyeshadow: 12 months

If you can't recall when you purchased it or if the product has changed in smell, texture or colour it's best to replace it.

And don't forget your brushes and sponges, keep them clean and wash them frequently.

The festive season is a wonderful time to look and feel your best but healthy eyes should always come first. Replacing old cosmetics, maintaining good hygiene and being aware of expiry dates are simple but powerful ways to protect your eye health.

Dates to remember

Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th November
We will be closed for system upgrades

From 12.30pm on Friday 28th November and Saturday 29th November
We will be closed for staff training

From 12.30pm on Tuesday 9th December
We will be closed for team bonding
(it's our Christmas lunch!)

And finally

From 1pm on Wednesday 24th December to 1st January

We will be closed for the Christmas holidays

Challenge of the Christmas gathering?

When Christmas conversations become a struggle, could it be an undiagnosed hearing loss?

The Christmas season is a time for joy, laughter and reconnecting with family and friends. But for many people, it can also bring unexpected frustration, particularly for those living with undiagnosed hearing loss.

Audiologists often see people reach a turning point over the festive period. It's the time of year when hearing difficulties that have been manageable in day-to-day life suddenly become impossible to ignore.

Christmas celebrations are wonderful but notoriously noisy with clinking glasses, background music, children playing and multiple conversations happening at once. For someone with hearing loss, this creates a perfect storm of listening challenges.

Many people find themselves nodding along politely, laughing when others do or quietly withdrawing from conversations altogether. Unfortunately, this can lead to feelings of isolation at a time that should feel most connected.

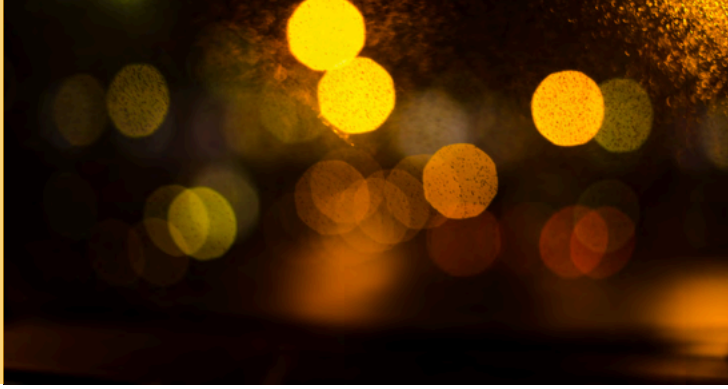
The signs that you (or someone you love) might be struggling to hear. Hearing loss often develops gradually, which means it can go unnoticed or even denied for years. Common signs include:

- Frequently asking others to repeat themselves.
- Feeling that people "mumble" or speak too quickly.
- Turning up the TV or radio louder than others prefer.
- Struggling to follow group conversations or phone calls.
- Feeling unusually tired after social events (known as listening fatigue).

If these sound familiar, it's not just part of "getting older" it could be an early sign of hearing loss. Modern hearing tests are quick, painless and highly accurate. At our audiology clinic, Antonio will use advanced diagnostic equipment to assess your hearing and explain your results clearly.

Our Hearing Assessments are free of charge. Why not call us on 01435 868181 and arrange a check up?

Tackling the challenges of night driving



Many people find driving after dark more difficult and it's not just in your head. Low light reduces contrast and depth perception, while glare from headlights can make vision even worse. As we age, these effects become more noticeable. Understanding why this happens and what can help makes a real difference to both comfort and safety on the road.

Get your eyes checked regularly
Even slight changes in vision can affect how well you see in the dark. An up-to-date prescription ensures you're getting the clearest possible vision for driving.

Consider anti-reflection coatings
Lenses with an anti-reflective (AR) coating help reduce glare from headlights and streetlights, improving contrast and clarity.

Keep your lenses and windscreen clean
Dirt and smudges scatter light and make glare worse, inside and out! It's surprising how dirty the screen and windows can get, especially in winter with mucky roads causing spray.

Combat dry eyes
If your eyes feel tired or gritty at night, artificial tears or regular breaks can reduce discomfort.

Adjust your environment
Dim your dashboard lights slightly and avoid looking directly at oncoming headlights. Give your eyes time to adjust before setting off.

W**hen to seek advice**
If you notice increasing difficulty seeing at night, halos around lights or excessive glare then it's worth booking an eye examination. These symptoms can sometimes indicate underlying issues such as cataracts or early changes in your vision.

Road Safety Week

16th to 22nd November 2025

Every year, Brake highlights the importance of road safety in their campaign highlighted every November.

This UK charity supports those affected by crashes and campaigns to make our roads safer for all drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

www.brake.org.uk

#roadsafetyawareness

Creamy Garlic and Sprout Spaghetti

Love or hate them, brussels sprouts are packed full of goodness.

Great for eye health, they are full of antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin and they are also rich in vitamins A and C.
This recipe is a midweek marvel, perfect for a quick supper and great for using up any brussels sprouts!

180g Spaghetti
1 tbsp Olive Oil
2 shallots, halved and finely sliced
250g Brussels Sprouts, trimmed and shredded
100g soft garlic and herb cheese like Boursin
1 Lemon, zest of all and juice of 1/2
25g walnuts, toasted and roughly chopped

Serves 2 as a main meal

Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil. Add your pasta and cook for 1 minute less than the pack instructions. Reserve a mug of the cooking water and then drain the pasta.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium high heat. Add the shallots and fry with a pinch of salt for 2 minutes, then add the sprouts and fry for another 3-4 minutes until softened but still vibrant green.

Add the spaghetti and 100ml pasta water to the pan and spoon in the soft cheese. Toss this together until you have a smooth, silky sauce. Add the lemon zest and a squeeze of lemon juice, then season, sprinkle over the walnuts and serve immediately.

Use any type of pasta for this dish, but spaghetti or linguine work well. Also any soft garlic cheese you choose and if you don't have shallots you could try a small onion instead.

Recipe from Waitrose.com

Eye wonder if you know?

Blue light filters may help reduce digital eye strain, but taking regular breaks is still best.

Refer a friend

Did you know that if you refer a friend to us, once they have had an eye examination we will send you a £20 John Lewis / Waitrose voucher as a thank you!

This offer is valid for new patients to the practice only. There is no limit on how many friends you refer, just tell them to mention your name when they book the appointment!

It's competition time!

What are pigs in blankets?

£75 MJO voucher

Simply email your answers to us at reception@melinajoy.co.uk

Competition closing date 31/12/2025 The winner will be picked at random & notified by email.

We value your feedback! Leave us a review on Google and we'll enter you into a prize draw to win a £25 John Lewis gift voucher. We can't wait to hear from you!

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