



How well *do* you see?

Taking Care of Your Eyes and Vision: A Checklist for Adults Ages 60 and older

Protecting your vision and ensuring proper eye health is one of the most important things you can do to help maintain quality of life age 60 and older.¹ Vision changes occur as you get older – that’s a fact – but they don’t necessarily have to compromise your lifestyle or quality of eyesight. Knowing what to expect and when to seek professional care are important steps to safeguarding your vision.

Age-related Eye and Vision Problems that are Important for You to Know

The most important thing you can do to protect your vision is to have yearly eye examinations. As you age, you become more likely to get certain eye health problems, including:

- **Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)** – AMD can cause progressive loss of central vision, affecting the ability to see fine detail, drive, read and recognize faces.¹
- **Diabetic Retinopathy** – Affecting people with diabetes, diabetic retinopathy is a result of progressive damage to the blood vessels within the retina.¹
- **Retinal Detachment** – Retinal detachment is a tearing or separation of the retina from the underlying tissue. If not treated promptly, it can cause permanent vision loss.¹
- **Cataracts** – A common condition that occurs with aging, a cataract is a clouding of the eye’s natural lens and can interfere with normal vision. Treatment is surgical removal of the lens.¹
- **Glaucoma** – Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that lead to progressive damage of the optic nerve.³ If it seems that you are losing peripheral or side vision, it could be a sign of glaucoma.¹
- **Dry Eye** – Dry eye is a common, yet uncomfortable condition, and can disrupt everyday activities.⁴ It can occur when the tear glands stop making enough of the water component of tears, and as a result, the tear film becomes dry and causes eye irritation.⁵

Did you know?

Approximately 65% of visually impaired people are over the *age of 50*?²



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Keeping Your Eyes Healthy

Health problems affecting other parts of the body can also affect vision. To help keep eyes healthy and to protect your vision, consider these simple guidelines:

- **Find out if you're at a high risk for eye diseases** – Diabetes, high blood pressure, or medications that have eye-related side effects can cause vision problems.¹
- **Eat well** – Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, particularly dark leafy greens, is important for keeping your eyes healthy. Research has shown that eating fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, tuna and halibut, also have eye health benefits.¹
- **Wear sunglasses** – It's important to protect your eyes from UV rays. Strong sunlight can damage eyes and increase your risk for cataracts.⁶
- **Quit smoking** – Smoking is as bad for your eyes as it is for your body, and has been linked to an increased risk of developing AMD, cataracts and optic nerve damage.⁶
- **Maintain a healthy weight** – Being overweight can increase your risk for developing diabetes and other systemic conditions that can lead to vision loss.⁷
- **Use good lighting** – To see well, your eyes need three times as much light when you're 60 as they did at age 20.⁶
- **Exercise** – Good circulation and oxygen intake are important for healthy eyes.¹

1. American Optometric Association, Adult Vision: Over 60 Years of Age. <http://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/good-vision-throughout-life/adult-vision-19-to-40-years-of-age/adult-vision-over-60-years-of-age?sso=y> [Accessed July 15, 2014]

2. World Health Organization, Visual Impairment and Blindness. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs282/en/> [Accessed July 15, 2014]

3. American Optometric Association. Glaucoma. <http://www.aoa.org/Glaucoma.xml> [Accessed July 15, 2014]

4. National Eye Institute, Facts about Dry Eye. <http://www.nei.nih.gov/health/dryeye/dryeye.asp> [Accessed July 15, 2014]

5. MayoClinic.com, Dry Eyes. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/dry-eyes/DS00463/METHOD=print&DSECTION=all> [Accessed July 15, 2014]

6. NHS Choices, Eye Health Tips for Older People. <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/over60s/Pages/eyehealth.aspx> [Accessed July 15, 2014]

7. National Eye Institute, Eye health Tips. <http://www.nei.nih.gov/healthyeyes/eyehealthtips.asp> [Accessed July 15, 2014]



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