

Seasons of Faith and Hope

September 2025

EYE HEALTH

There is a lot you can do to protect your vision and keep your eyes healthy. The National Institute on Aging and The National Eye Institute offer some advice to promote eye health as you age. Some changes that are normal as we age include losing the ability to see up close, having trouble distinguishing colors, such as blue from black, and needing more time to adjust to changing levels of light.

Have your eyes checked regularly by an eye care professional. Many people don't notice signs or symptoms in early stages of eye diseases but sometimes they can be signs of a more serious problem. For example, the eyes may leak tears. This can happen with light sensitivity, wind, or temperature changes. Sunglasses and eye drops may help. Sometimes, leaking tears may be a symptom of dry eye or sign of an infection or blocked tear duct. These problems can be treated by an eye professional. Finding and treating eye problems early can help protect your vision and prevent vision loss.

Aging increases the risk of some eye diseases. While some vision changes are a normal part of aging, vision loss related to eye diseases and conditions can be prevented. Seniors might have a higher risk of some eye conditions if they are overweight or obese, have diabetes or hypertension, or if they have a family history of eye disease.

Eye problems can lead to vision loss and blindness in older adults include:

- ✓ Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)
- ✓ Diabetic retinopathy
- ✓ Cataracts
- ✓ Glaucoma
- ✓ Dry eye

Individuals may have few or no early symptoms. Regular eye exams are the best protection. Everyone over 50 should have a dilated eye exam every year or as recommended by their eye professional. After age 60, people should get a dilated eye exam every year or two.

A healthy lifestyle promotes overall health and can reduce the risk of eye diseases and conditions that can lead to vision problems. Some tips to promote healthy vision include:

- ✓ Make smart food choices. Eat green, dark, leafy greens and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids.
- ✓ Be physically active and maintain a healthy weight.
- ✓ Maintain normal blood pressure.
- ✓ Manage diabetes.
- ✓ Wear sunglasses that block 99-100 percent of both UVA and UVB radiation, on sunny and cloudy days.
- ✓ Wear protective eyewear during activities like certain sports or during exposure to dust and debris from remodeling or construction activities.
- ✓ Give your eyes a rest, especially when looking at a computer for a long time. **Follow the 20-20-20 rule.** Rest your eyes by taking a break every 20 minutes to look at something about 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- ✓ If you wear contacts, take steps to prevent eye infections. Always wash your hands before putting contacts in or taking them out. Disinfect your contact lenses and replace them regularly.

Signs of an eye emergency, requiring immediate examination by an eye professional include:

- ✓ Sudden inability to see or everything looking blurry
- ✓ Seeing new floaters and/or flashes of light
- ✓ Eye pain
- ✓ Double vision
- ✓ Redness or swelling of your eye or eyelid

