



Focus on Low Vision

African Americans are at higher risk for vision loss from certain eye diseases. If you are living with low vision, vision rehabilitation can help you make the most of the vision you do have and maintain your independence.

This fact sheet contains information about low vision — including the causes, symptoms, and what you can do to focus on your vision.

LOW VISION

Approximately 188,000 African Americans have low vision, and this number is expected to reach 366,000 by 2030. Most African Americans have not heard of low vision.

What is it?

- Low vision is when even with regular glasses, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery people have difficulty seeing, making everyday tasks difficult to do.

What causes it?

- Eye diseases or health disorders
- Eye injuries
- Birth defects

What are the signs of low vision?

Even when wearing your glasses or contact lenses, you still have difficulty—

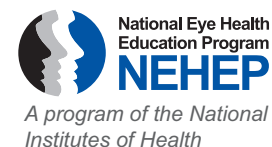
- Recognizing the faces of family and friends.
- Reading, cooking, or doing daily activities.
- Selecting and matching the color of your clothes.

How can you focus on your vision?

People with low vision should—

- See an eye care professional as often as recommended.
- Learn about vision rehabilitation.
- Get a good support team that includes the person with low vision, his or her primary eye care professional, a low vision specialist, and rehabilitation specialists.

Write
the **Vision**
Make your plan to protect your sight.



VISION REHABILITATION CAN HELP

There are rehabilitation services that help people with low vision make the most of their remaining vision and stay independent by teaching them how to:

- Move safely around the home.
- Continue to read, cook, and do other activities.
- Find resources, adaptive devices, and support.

If you or someone you love have been diagnosed with low vision, ask your eye care professional for a referral to a low vision specialist. This is an ophthalmologist or optometrist who specializes in working with people with vision loss. A low vision specialist provides guidance about vision rehabilitation and can determine what services and devices will benefit you the most.

Vision rehabilitation can take place in many different settings, including ophthalmology or optometry offices; hospital clinics; state, nonprofit, or for-profit vision rehabilitation organizations; and independent living centers.

Take charge of your eye health. If you have low vision, talk with your eye care professional. Here are some questions you may want to ask:

Questions to ask your eye care professional:

- Will regular eyeglasses improve my vision?
- What medical or surgical treatments are available for my condition?
- What can I do to protect or prolong my vision?
- Will diet, exercise, or other lifestyle changes help?

- If my vision can't be corrected, can you refer me to a specialist in low vision?
- Where can I get vision rehabilitation services?

If your eye care professional refers you to a low vision specialist, visit us at <https://www.nei.nih.gov/lowvision/content/know3> for some questions you can ask the specialist.

For more information on low vision and vision rehabilitation, visit: www.nei.nih.gov/lowvision.



National Eye Institute



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