

See well for a lifetime:
**TAKE CARE
OF YOUR EYES
AS YOU AGE**



Aging is a process that provides us with many opportunities to reinvent ourselves, from major transformations such as becoming a grandparent or going back to school to simple lifestyle changes like starting a new exercise program. Don't miss out on any of these opportunities; take stock of your eye health to make sure you are seeing your best and that your eyes are healthy.

While some changes to vision are normal with aging, people are at higher risk for vision loss from eye diseases and conditions as they age.

Many eye diseases have no early warning signs or symptoms, but they can be detected early with regular comprehensive dilated eye exams.

A comprehensive dilated eye exam is different from the basic eye exam or screening you have to get new glasses or contacts. Your eye care professional will place drops in your eyes to dilate, or widen, the pupil. Then, he or she will use a special magnifying glass to examine the inside of your eye for early signs of—

- Age-related macular degeneration, which gradually destroys the macula (the part of the eye that provides sharp, central vision)
- Cataract, a clouding of the lens in the eye
- Diabetic retinopathy, a complication of diabetes that damages blood vessels in the retina (the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye)
- Glaucoma, a group of diseases that can cause fluid and pressure to build up in the eye and damage the optic nerve

Don't wait until you notice problems with your vision. Call your eye care professional today to make an appointment for a comprehensive dilated eye exam. Early diagnosis and treatment are the best ways to prevent vision loss. And if you have been diagnosed with an eye disease or condition, work with your eye care professional to learn about your treatment or rehabilitation options. Improve your knowledge of eye health to ensure a healthy foundation for change.

Visit www.nei.nih.gov/agingeye
for more information.



To learn more about comprehensive dilated eye exams and age-related eye diseases, watch this series of videos at <http://www.nei.nih.gov/videos>.

The National Eye Institute, one of the National Institutes of Health and the federal government's principal agency for vision research, offers additional eye health information and tips for people to protect their vision as they age. Visit <http://www.nei.nih.gov/agingeye> to learn more.

In addition to making comprehensive dilated eye exams part of your routine health care, follow these tips to maintain healthy vision now and as you age:

Eat a healthy, balanced diet. Dark, leafy greens such as spinach, kale, and collard greens are especially good for eye health. Eye health benefits also come from eating fish that are high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, tuna, and halibut.

Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight increases your risk for diabetes. Diabetes complications, such as diabetic retinopathy or glaucoma, can eventually lead to vision loss.

Don't smoke. Smoking is as bad for your eyes as it is for the rest of your body. Smoking increases your risk for many eye diseases and conditions.

Wear sunglasses and a brimmed hat when outdoors. Protect your eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays when you are outdoors. Choose sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of both UV-A and UV-B radiation.

Wear protective eyewear. Wear protective eyewear when playing sports or doing activities around the home. Protective eyewear includes safety glasses and goggles, safety shields, and eye guards specially designed to provide the correct protection for a certain activity.

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