

## Healthy Vision: Take care of your eyes!



### *Care for your eyes to make them last for life*

Taking care of your vision should be a priority, just like eating healthy and engaging in physical activity. Having healthy vision can help keep you safe when you are driving, while at work, home or school, participating in sports, or taking part in recreational activities. Fortunately, many eye problems and diseases can be treated if caught early.

To make sure you keep seeing clearly, get a comprehensive dilated eye exam as often as your eye care professional recommends. An eye care professional will examine your eyes for signs of vision problems or eye diseases. It's the best way to find out if you need glasses or contacts, or are in the early stages of an eye disease.

You should have a comprehensive dilated eye exam regularly to check for common eye problems. If you haven't had an exam for some time, schedule one this month. CDC's Vision Health Initiative and the National Eye Institute are encouraging Americans to take care of their eyes to make sure they can see well throughout their lives.

Visit an eye care professional if you have decreased vision, eye pain, drainage or redness of the eye, double vision, or diabetes, or if you

see flashes of light, floaters (tiny specks that appear to float before your eyes), or circles (halos) around light sources.

### **There are nine ways you can help protect your vision:**

1. Get a comprehensive dilated eye exam for yourself and your family members.
2. Know your family's eye health history. It's important to know if anyone has been diagnosed with an eye disease or condition, since many are hereditary.
3. Eat right to protect your sight—in particular, eat plenty of dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale, or collard greens, and fish that is high in omega-3 fatty acids such as salmon, albacore tuna, trout and halibut.
4. Maintain a healthy weight.
5. Wear protective eyewear when playing sports or doing activities around the home, such as painting, yard work, and home repairs.
6. Quit smoking or never start.
7. Wear sunglasses that block 99 percent to 100 percent of ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation.
8. Clean your hands prior to taking out your contact lens and be sure to cleanse your contact lenses properly to avoid the risk of infection.
9. Practice workplace eye safety.

Taking care of your eyes also may benefit your overall health. People with vision problems are more likely than those with good vision to have diabetes, poor hearing, heart problems, high blood pressure, lower back pain and stroke, as well as have increased risk for falls, accidents, and depression. Among people age 65 and older, 54.2 percent of those who are blind and 41.7 percent of those with impaired vision say their overall health is fair or poor. Just 21.5 percent of older Americans without vision problems reported fair to poor health.

Although older adults tend to have more vision problems, preschoolers may not see as well as they should. Just one out of seven preschoolers receives an eye screening, and fewer than one out of four receives some type of vision screening. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends vision screening for all children ages 3 to 5 years to find conditions such as amblyopia, or lazy eye, which can be treated effectively if caught early.

CDC's Vision Health Initiative team works with partners to promote vision health and quality of life for all populations, through all life stages, by preventing and controlling eye diseases, eye injury, and vision loss resulting in disability. The initiative is part of CDC's Division of Diabetes Translation.

For more information:

[Vision Health Initiative](#)

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