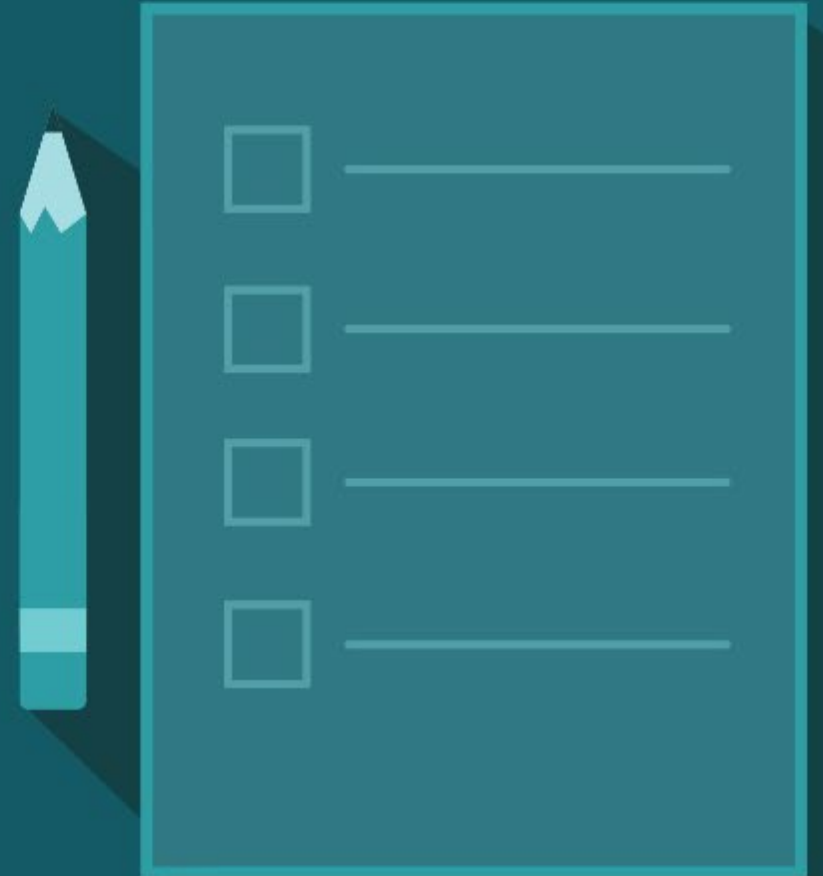


Keeping an Eye on Your Vision Health



Overview

- Vision and Your Health
- Age and Vision
- Common Eye Conditions
- Taking Care of Your Eyes
- Vision Exam
- Vision Providers



The Connection Between Vision & Your Health





A Window Into Your Health

A vision provider can tell a lot about the health of your body by looking at your eyes, including some signs of serious health issues.

Many people first learn they have serious health conditions through a vision care exam.

Source: <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/surprising-health-conditions-eye-exam-detects>

During a **comprehensive eye exam**, your vision provider can observe and evaluate the health of the blood vessels in your retina, which can help predict your risk of developing certain diseases.

Some conditions, like diabetes and high blood pressure, may cause changes in the appearance of the blood vessels in your eyes.



Source: <https://www.aaopt.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/surprising-health-conditions-eye-exam-detects>

In addition to physical difficulties, like higher **risk of falls**, loss of vision can also lead to increased feelings of **anxiety, isolation, and depression.**

In a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 4 adults with vision loss reported anxiety or depression.



Sources: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7721280/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/resources/features/vision-loss-mental-health.html>

How Your Age Can Affect Your Vision Health



Children

Many children with vision impairments are misdiagnosed with learning disabilities, preventing them from receiving proper care and negatively affecting their long-term academic performance.

This is even more common for children in low-to-moderate income families that lack access to eye care.

Correcting vision issues early is important for children's overall health and academic success.

Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8548846/>



Adults

Clear vision is critical to complete daily tasks such as driving a car, maintaining a stable job, and caring for a family.

Additionally, visual impairments have a long-term financial impact.

The average annual salary for visually impaired adults is nearly \$10,000 less than those with unimpaired vision.

Source: <https://ophthalmology.pitt.edu/vision-impairment/economic-impact-vision-impairment>





Seniors

Seniors are at risk for age-related health concerns, and impaired vision can make it even more difficult to address health issues.

Older adults are at an especially high risk of visual impairment—**by age 80, more than half of all Americans either have cataracts or have had cataract surgery.**

Vision care exams can detect many health issues such as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension—all of which may affect older adults at greater rates.

Source: <https://ophthalmology.pitt.edu/vision-impairment/economic-impact-vision-impairment>

Common Eye Conditions





Glaucoma typically occurs when there is too much pressure inside the eye, which causes damage to the optic nerve at the back of the eyeball, leading to permanent vision loss.

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness for individuals over the age of 60.

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/glaucoma/symptoms-causes/syc-20372839>

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is caused by the degeneration of the macula, which is the area of the retina responsible for central vision.

AMD is the leading cause of vision loss for individuals over the age of 50.



Source: <https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/eye-and-vision-conditions/macular-degeneration>



Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of vision impairment and blindness among working-age adults in the U.S.

It occurs when diabetes affects the blood vessels in the retina, causing them to leak and distort vision.

Check your risk at: [Diabetes-Related Retinopathy Risk Test](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetic-retinopathy/symptoms-causes/syc-20371611)

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetic-retinopathy/symptoms-causes/syc-20371611>

Refractive errors are a type of vision problem that makes it hard to see clearly. When the shape of your cornea or lens is abnormal, it causes light to enter the wrong part of your eye.

Eyeglasses and contacts can correct refractive errors by realigning the light that enters your eye.



Experience What It's Like to Lose Your Vision

Our **Vision Simulator** lets you see through the eyes of someone affected by macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, cataracts and more.

Try it at versanthealth.com/visionsimulator.



CATARACT

DIABETIC
RETINOPATHY

PRESBYOPIA

Taking Care of Your Eyes



Maintain a Healthy Blood Pressure

High blood pressure can lead to serious health complications, including heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.

- ✓ Get your blood pressure checked regularly
- ✓ Limit your salt (sodium) intake
- ✓ Consider the DASH (Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension) eating plan
- ✓ Limit alcohol
- ✓ Manage stress
- ✓ Take blood pressure medication as prescribed

Always consult your doctor before starting a new diet.

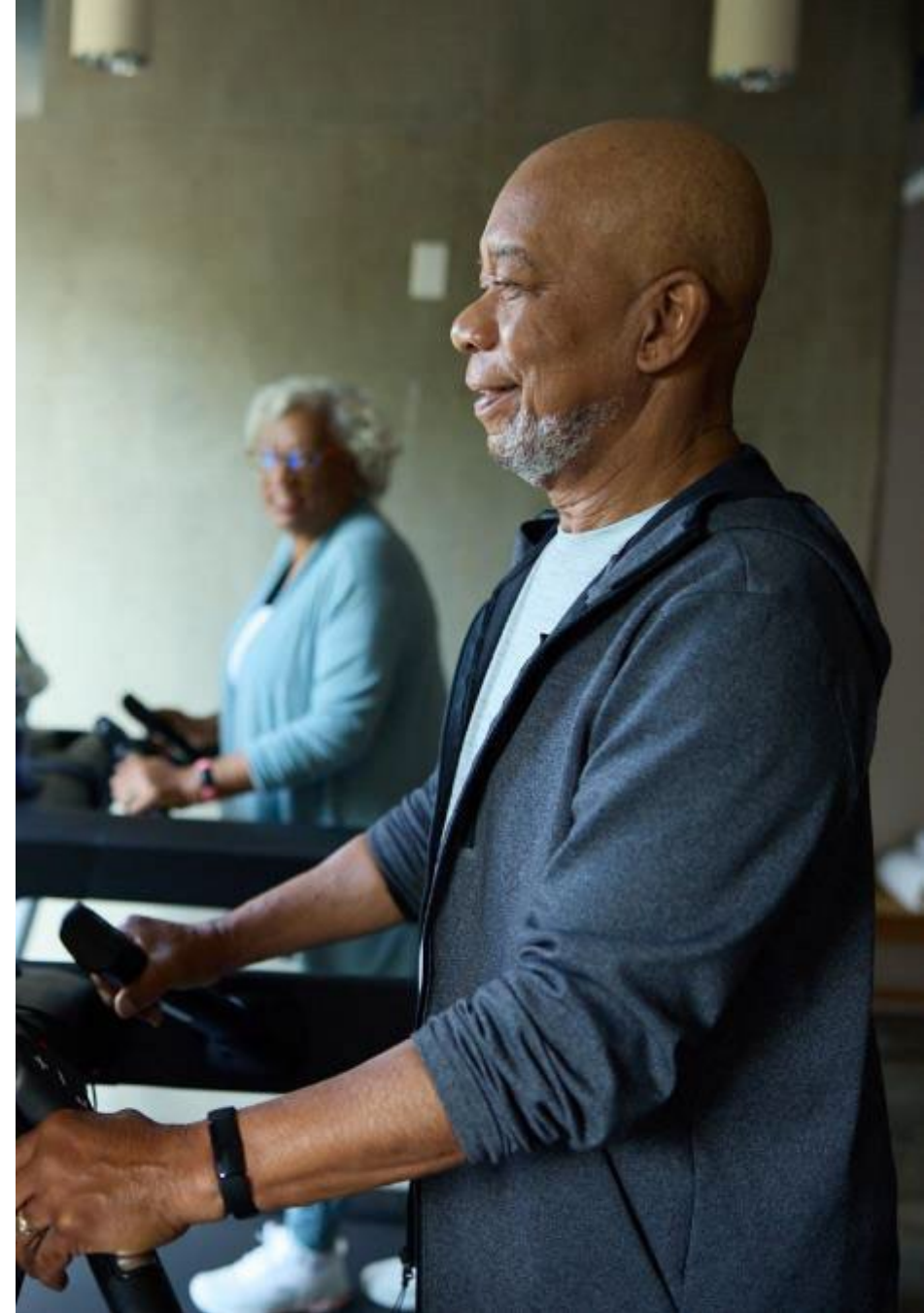
Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/high-blood-pressure/art-20045868>

Get Regular Exercise

Doctors recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week, such as:

- Brisk walking
- Bicycling
- Water aerobics
- General gardening

Always consult your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.
Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/index.htm>



Protect Your Eyes

Too much sun exposure on your eyes can increase your risk for eye conditions. You can limit these effects by wearing UV-protective sunglasses, wearing a brimmed hat and never looking directly at the sun.

In workplaces there can be potential eye hazards. Protective eyewear like safety glasses, goggles, or face shields is crucial.



Source: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/articles/2019/07/how-to-protect-your-eyes-from-uv-damage>

Limit Screen Time

Many of us spend multiple hours a day in front of a screen, whether it be for work or entertainment.

Screens on phones, computers and TVs emit **blue light**, a type of light that can strain your eyes and significantly impact your sleep.

Source: <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/should-you-be-worried-about-blue-light>



Give Your Eyes a Rest

Try the 20-20-20 rule:

Every 20 minutes

look away about 20 feet in front of you

for 20 seconds

Source: <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/computer-usage>



Get an Annual Eye Exam

Just like getting an annual physical, routine vision care exams are a crucial part of preventive care.

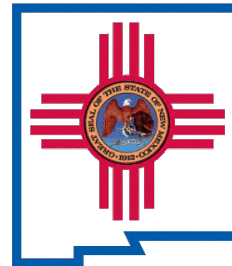
During a vision care exam, your vision care provider will perform a series of tests that measure different aspects of your eye health. Vision care exams usually take less than an hour.





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Cataracts are the most common cause of vision loss for individuals over age 40. It's also the primary cause of blindness in the world.

A cataract is clouding of the (normally) clear natural lens of your eye commonly due to age. Diseases, such as diabetes, can accelerate the formation of a cataract due to uncontrolled blood sugar levels.



Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK402367/>

These Factors Can Increase Your Risk of Glaucoma

- High internal eye pressure, also known as intraocular pressure
- Over age 55
- Black, Asian, or Hispanic
- Family history of glaucoma
- Prolonged use of corticosteroid medications, especially eye drops

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/glaucoma/symptoms-causes/syc-20372839>

These Factors Can Increase Your Risk of Cataracts

- Increasing age
- Diabetes
- Excessive exposure to sunlight
- Smoking
- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- Previous eye injury or inflammation
- Previous eye surgery
- Prolonged use of corticosteroid medications
- Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cataracts/symptoms-causes/syc-20353790>

These Factors Can Increase Your Risk of AMD

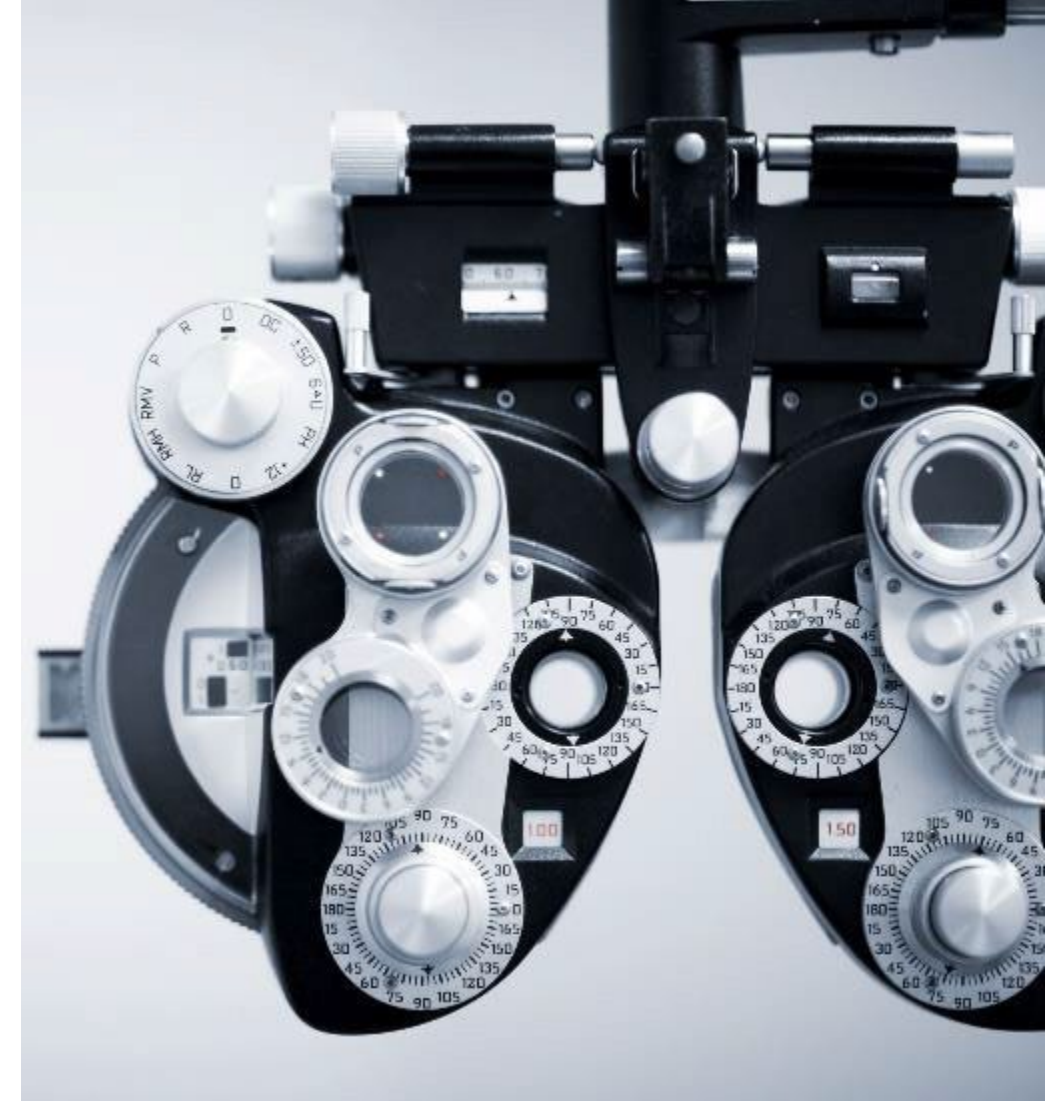
- Over age 55
- Family history of AMD
- Caucasian descent
- History of smoking



<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/wet-macular-degeneration/symptoms-causes/syc-20351107>

These Factors Can Increase Your Risk of Diabetic Retinopathy

- Having diabetes for a long time
- Poor control of your blood sugar level
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Pregnancy
- Tobacco use
- Black, Hispanic, or Native American



<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetic-retinopathy/symptoms-causes/syc-20371611>



Often referred to as a “crooked” or “lazy eye”, **amblyopia** occurs when the brain fails to process inputs from one eye and, over time, favor the other.

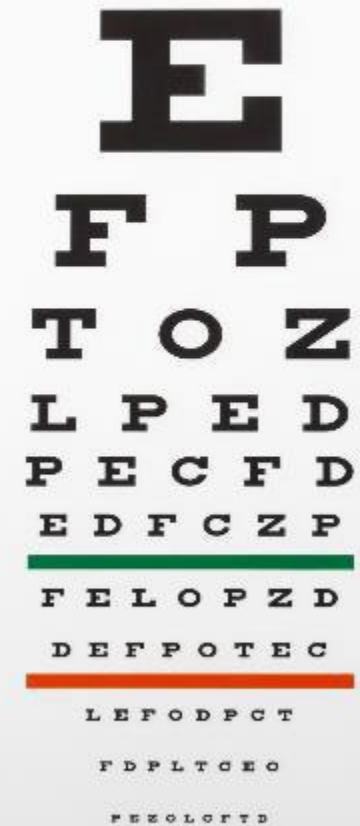
Common treatments include patching, corrective eyewear and surgery.

Source: <https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/amblyopia-lazy-eye>

Your Vision Care Exam



Understanding the Differences Between Vision Care Providers



Ophthalmologists

An **ophthalmologist** is a medical or osteopathic doctor who is licensed to practice medicine and surgery.

They differ from optometrists and opticians in their level of training and ability to provide medical and surgical interventions for eye conditions.

Source: <https://www.webmd.com/eye-health/eye-doctors-optometrists-ophthalmologists>



Optometrists

Optometrists are health care professionals who provide primary vision care ranging from sight testing and correction to the diagnosis, treatment and management of vision changes.

They can:

- perform eye exams and vision tests
- prescribing and dispensing corrective lenses
- detecting certain eye abnormalities
- prescribe medications for certain eye diseases

Source: <https://www.webmd.com/eye-health/eye-doctors-optometrists-ophthalmologists>



Opticians

Opticians are technicians trained to design and fit eyeglass lenses and frames as well as other devices to correct eyesight.

They use prescriptions supplied by ophthalmologists or optometrists, but do not test vision or write prescriptions for visual correction.

Opticians cannot diagnose or treat eye diseases.

Source: <https://www.webmd.com/eye-health/eye-doctors-optometrists-ophthalmologists>





Want to learn more?

Visit www.versanthealth.com/blog to learn more about the importance of good vision health and its connection to your overall health.