

Quick Steps for Healthy Vision

Many factors influence eye health. Some, such as diet and lifestyle, can be controlled; others, like aging and genetic predisposition, cannot. But monitoring eye health can play an important role in preventing, or minimizing, vision loss.

Here are some general guidelines for protecting your vision:

Schedule routine eye examinations. It's possible to have a serious vision problem and not even know it! Even if you don't notice changes in your vision, some eye diseases have no symptoms in beginning stages. Early diagnosis may save your sight; routinely visit your eye care professional.

Monitor your blood pressure and exercise regularly. Cardiovascular stress, such as high blood pressure, can damage parts of the visual system and lead to vision loss. Work with your doctor to maintain normal blood pressure, a healthy diet and an approved exercise routine.

Guard your eyes from the sun. Prolonged exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays has been linked to cataracts and macular degeneration. Although studies have shown that people with fair complexions and blue eyes may be especially susceptible, everyone spending time outdoors should wear sunglasses with 100% UV-A and UV-B protection, along with a wide-brimmed hat.

Protect your eyes. A scratch, abrasion or other injury to the eye can lead to infection and scarring, which may result in some degree of vision loss. Wear protective goggles when the risk of eye injury is increased; for example, when working with tools, or playing racquetball or contact sports.

Don't smoke! Cigarette smoking has been linked to a number of eye conditions, including cataracts and macular degeneration.

Eat Your Fruits and Veggies. A diet rich in fruits, whole grains, and vegetables provides the nutrients necessary to keep your eyes and body healthy.

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