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**MEDIA
PLANET**

VISION



A LIFETIME OF HEALTHY VISION

Your guide to preventive care and eye health

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TIPS

**TO KEEP YOUR
FAMILY'S EYES
HEALTHY**

Glaucoma

Do you know what
signs to look for?



PHOTO: PREVENT BLINDNESS AMERICA

The carrot myth

Diet and nutrition
for eye health



You protect their skin. What about their eyes?

Children's developing eyes let in 70 percent more UV rays than adults' eyes. Since prolonged exposure to UV rays can lead to macular degeneration, cataracts and skin cancer around the eyelids, it's critical to protect their eyes from an early age.

Learn more about the effects of UV rays on the eye and protection options at thevisioncouncil.org/consumers/sunglasses.

 **THE VISION COUNCIL**

CHALLENGES

Steps to avoid eye and vision problems

Most Americans consider vision the most important of the five senses. We treasure the ability to see and interact with the world around us. Unfortunately, many people put their vision at risk, as a large number of people do not receive comprehensive eye examinations on a regular basis. Some may not have examinations due to lack of insurance. Now that Washington has passed health care reform, it is our hope that barriers to regular eye care have been eliminated; our profession has worked to ensure patient access to vision care.

Eye exams for children essential

Professional eye care should start early in life. Good vision is a key factor in a child's development and academic progress. The American Optometric Association (AOA) recommends eye exams by an eye doctor at six months of age, at age three, before starting school, and

every two years thereafter. For those children considered at risk, your doctor of optometry may recommend more frequent exams.

"Millenials" and eye care

Most adults enjoy healthy eyes and good vision. But as young adults transition into the workplace, the increased demands placed on their vision may cause eye strain, or in some cases, preventable eye injuries. By taking proper steps to maintain a healthy lifestyle and by protecting your eyes from stress and injury, you can avoid many eye and vision problems. You can also better ensure good eye health by eating properly, avoiding smoking, exercising regularly and wearing sunglasses.

Baby boomers and aging eyes

Because it is a fact of life that vision changes with age, it is equally important that adults receive regular eye exams. Americans in their 40s and 50s are at the stage when many are affected by vision problems. Regular eye examinations are important to check for eye dis-



Joe E. Ellis, O.D.
President, American Optometric Association

MY BEST TIPS

- **Wear sunglasses** to protect against damaging ultra-violet (UV) radiation.
- **Watch what you eat** - little changes in your diet can have a big impact on eye health.
- **Give your eyes** regular "20-20-20" breaks when using computers or hand-held devices; every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break and view something 20 feet away.
- **Don't forget** protective eyewear when doing hazardous work around the home.
- **And most importantly**, have your and your families' eyes examined regularly!

eases such as glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration and in order to see as clearly as possible. In addition, exams often offer indications about an individual's overall health. The AOA recommends adults ages 19-60 receive an eye exam every two years. Those 61 and over should receive eye exams annually. If you are at risk for eye problems due to family history, diabetes, or high blood pressure, more frequent exams may be recommended. Because some eye problems have no obvious signs or symptoms, people are often unaware that a problem exists. Early diagnosis and treatment is the key to maintaining good vision and eye health.

We hope that you will find a variety of helpful information in the articles included in this special report so that you'll have the tools and knowledge to ensure a lifetime of healthy vision. Please visit www.aoa.org for more information or to find a doctor of optometry near you.



protected exposure over long periods of time to UV rays from the sun can and often does damage the eye, and the effects aren't good. UV radiation can cause macular degeneration, cataracts and cancer among other diseases.

Wearing sunglasses with 100 percent UV protection is the best way to shield your eyes from the sun.

RICHARD SHARP
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The high cost of serious eye disease

- **Question:** Are eye diseases preventable?
- **Answer:** Yes, regular eye exams, proper nutrition and wearing correct sunglasses can help prevent many eye diseases.

The statistics are staggering.

According to a study by the National Eye Institute and Prevent Blindness America, nearly 22 million Americans age 40 and older have cataracts, 2.3 million have glaucoma, 2 million have advanced AMD (age-related macular degeneration), and over 4.4 million are

affected by diabetic retinopathy.

Adult vision problems in the U.S. cost over \$51 billion annually, and with the dramatic rise of diabetes caused by obesity, the costs will likely continue to rise.

So what can be done to address the problem? Experts point out that many serious eye disorders could potentially be preventable.

Regular eye exams

According to the American Optometric Association's annual American Eye-Q survey, one in three respondents aged 55 or older reported not taking any

steps to cope with age-related eye and vision problems.

"A comprehensive eye exam by an optometrist can detect glaucoma, as well as other eye diseases," said Dr. Jerry Davidoff, chair of the American Optometric Association's (AOA) Low Vision Rehabilitation Section.

"Early detection and treatment of these vision disorders can help many patients preserve their vision, giving them more years of independence and good quality of life."

Proper sunglasses

According to the Vision Council, un-

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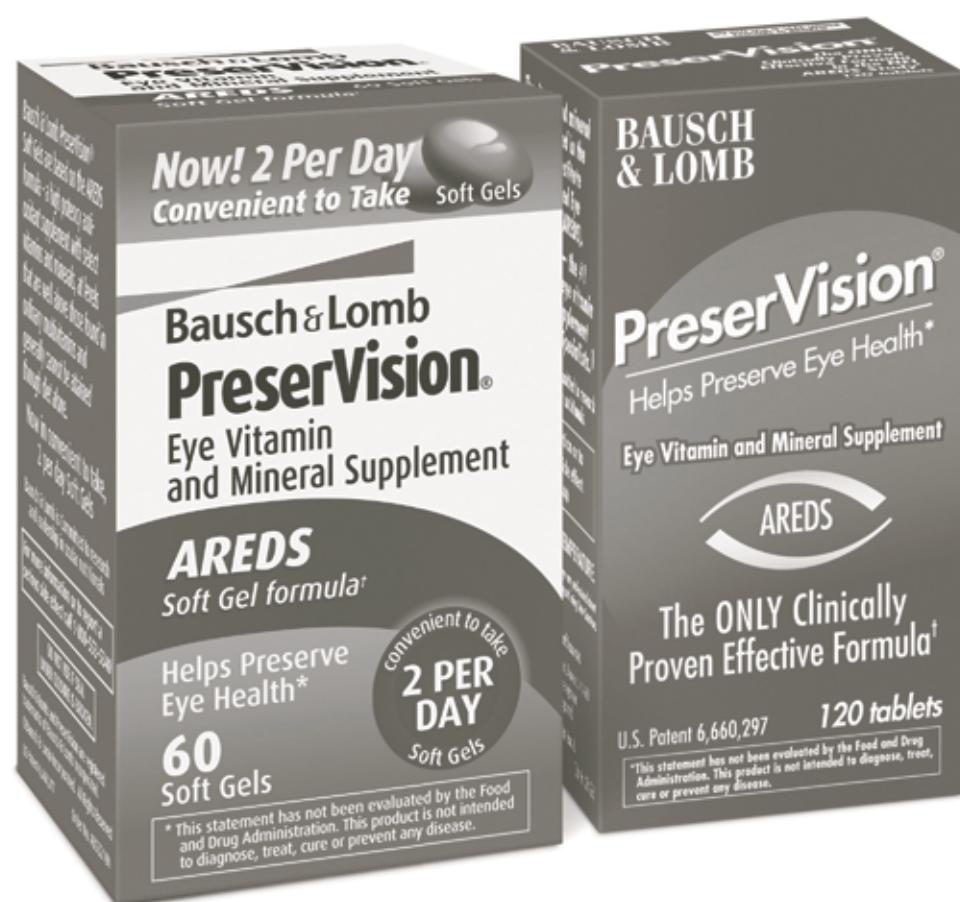
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1. Age-Related Eye Disease Study Research Group. A randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial of high-dose supplementation with vitamins C and E, beta carotene, and zinc for age-related macular degeneration and vision loss: AREDS Report No. 8. Arch Ophthalmol. 2001;119(10):1413-1436. 2. PreserVision® Eye Vitamin AREDS Soft Gel formula. Bausch & Lomb Web site http://www.bausch.com/en_us/consumers/visuocare/product/vitamins/preservision_softgel.aspx. Accessed January 7, 2010. © 2010 Bausch & Lomb Incorporated. Bausch & Lomb and PreserVision are registered trademarks of Bausch & Lomb Incorporated. OT10-0091

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INSPIRATION

Question: How recognizable is glaucoma?
Answer: Glaucoma is often called the “sneak thief of sight” because half of all patients who have it do not know it.

Sneak thief of sight can strike at any age

HOW I MADE IT

Glaucoma causes loss of sight by slowly damaging a part of the eye called the optic nerve. This nerve sends information from the eyes to the brain. When the optic nerve becomes damaged, it usually begins to damage peripheral vision. Without treatment, central vision becomes diminished. Other symptoms may include blurriness or the appearance of halos around lights.

Today, glaucoma costs the U.S. economy \$2.86 billion every year in direct medical costs for outpatient, inpatient and prescription drug services. Behind cataracts, it is the second leading cause of blindness and as of today, there are more than two million Americans over the age of 40 who have been diagnosed.

Although some may consider glaucoma to be an eye disease that only effects older adults, the truth is that although rare, it can also be found in children and teenagers.

Discovering a symptomless disease
A.J. DeGeorge from Chicago is now 27 years old but has been receiving treatment for juvenile open-angle glaucoma since he was 13. At the time of his diagnosis, he exhibited no signs or symptoms of the potentially blinding eye disease. His glaucoma was

only discovered because of a routine eye exam.

“There were no warning signs. I had very close to 20/20 vision and never had any pain,” said DeGeorge. “But, when the doctors checked the pressures in my eyes, they were unbelievably high and my optic nerves had shown signs of damage.”

After his diagnosis, DeGeorge began treatment with a glaucoma specialist, Mildred M.G. Olivier, M.D. Initial treatment included medications but later a Trabeculectomy (surgery) was needed in the right eye to lower the eye pressure so that no further damage would occur. Today, thanks to the early detection and consistently following his doctor’s directions, DeGeorge needs only to take eye drops in his left eye once a day.

Taking the matter to Capitol Hill
DeGeorge was fortunate enough to have access to affordable quality health care, something that many people in this country do not have

today. Because of his own experience with vision issues, DeGeorge has become an advocate on behalf of Prevent Blindness America for federal and state funding of vision health programs and has even gone to Capitol Hill to state his case.

“I would be blind by now if my eye doctor decided to not go through with a pressure test when I was 13. We need to make Congress aware of how serious glaucoma is and most of all how easy it is to prevent vision loss if diagnosed and treated properly,” said DeGeorge.

Unfortunately, once vision is lost to glaucoma, it cannot be restored. Vision loss can be lessened, however, if glaucoma is detected and treated early. Although there is still no cure for glaucoma, there is hope through new research and prevention programs.

For more information on glaucoma, please call Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020 or visit the Glaucoma Learning Center at preventblindness.org/glaucoma.



TIP

2

GET REGULAR EYE EXAMS

↓

TIPS

Risk factors that may increase the chance of having glaucoma

- **Age:** The older you are, the greater your risk.
- **Race:** African-Americans have glaucoma four to five times more often than others. African-Americans are also likely to have glaucoma at a younger age.
- **Family history:** If you have a parent, brother or sister with glaucoma, you are more likely to get glaucoma too. If you have glaucoma, your family members should get complete eye exams.
- **Medical history:** Diabetes, previous eye injuries, eye surgery or long-term steroid use can increase your risk of glaucoma.

What are the different types of glaucoma?

The most common types include:

Chronic (open angle) glaucoma

This is the most common type. In open angle glaucoma, aqueous fluid drains too slowly and pressure inside the eye builds up. It usually results from aging of the drainage channel, which doesn’t work as well over time. However, younger people can also get this type of glaucoma.

Normal tension glaucoma

This is a form of open angle glaucoma not related to high pressure. People with normal tension glaucoma may be unusually sensitive to normal levels of pressure. Reduced blood supply to the optic nerve may also play a role in normal tension glaucoma.

Acute (angle closure) glaucoma

Less than 10 percent of Caucasians or African-Americans have this form, but for those of Asian and Native American descent, the risks are as high as for open angle glaucoma. Hispanics are midway between these groups. It causes a sudden rise in pressure, requiring immediate,

emergency medical care. The signs are usually serious and may include blurred vision, severe headaches, eye pain, nausea, vomiting or seeing rainbow-like halos around lights. Occasionally, the condition may be without symptoms; similar to open angle.

Secondary glaucoma

Another 10 percent of glaucoma cases come from certain diseases and conditions that damage the eye’s drainage system. These include diabetes, leukemia, sickle-cell anemia, some forms of arthritis, cataracts, eye injuries or inflammation of the eye, steroid drug use and growth of unhealthy blood vessels. For information about uveitis, a kind of inflammation that can cause glaucoma, visit our Uveitis Learning Center.

Post-surgical glaucoma

Some surgeries, such as retinal reattachments, increase the chance of getting glaucoma.

HUGH R. PARRY
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Question: Can eating carrots really improve your vision?
Answer: Not exactly, but good nutrition can help prevent serious eye disease.

Eat your carrots: They help you see in the dark!

Okay, okay. It’s true. Carrots can’t really help you see in the dark.

In fact, no matter what your mother said to you growing up, there’s no conclusive proof that they even improve your eyesight per se. There is evidence, however, which suggests that the vitamins in carrots and many other vegetables are a vital part of preventative eye care.

“Nutrition is an important component of good health for the entire body, including the eyes,” said VSP Vision Care provider Denis Humphreys, O.D.

“More than 43 million Americans suffer from macular degeneration and/or cataracts, which are the two leading causes of vision loss and blindness. Research has shown

proper nutrition containing eye-healthy vitamins and minerals can help both prevent these conditions and slow vision loss.”

Data does show specifically that vitamin A (which is abundantly present in carrots), along with vitamins C, E and zinc, can be incredibly valuable in lowering risk of age-related macular degeneration. A, C, and E can also be helpful in reducing the impact of cataracts.

“Know the important vitamins and minerals that are vital to good eye health,” said Dr. Humphreys. “Be aware of the foods that supply them and incorporate them into your daily diet.”

Proper nutrition is also helpful in the battle against diabetes, which is the lead-

ing cause of new cases of blindness in adults 20-74 years of age, according to the Jewish Guild for the Blind, which provides preventive care, treatment and education for those with diabetes.

“Today there are nearly 24 million children and adults in the US who have diabetes, and each of these persons is at risk for vision loss. Patients with diabetes are at increased risk of eye diseases including diabetic retinopathy, cataracts and glaucoma,” said Alan R. Morse, JD, PhD, president and CEO of The Jewish Guild for the Blind.

If you are overweight, a modest weight loss through healthy eating and an active lifestyle can help prevent Type 2 diabetes. Weight loss can also help lower elevated blood glucose levels for those with Type 2 Diabetes, and help keep blood pressure under control, which is key, according to Morse.

“Perhaps the most important thing for anybody who has a history of diabetes in their family is to get a screening and to learn how to prevent diabetes or, if they have it, how to control and manage the disease,” said Morse.


FACTS

The eyes have it

According to the eye care coverage provider VSP, the following are great sources of eye-friendly vitamins:

- **Vitamin A:** Carrots, kale, spinach, dairy products, egg yolks
- **Vitamin C:** Citrus fruits (especially kiwi fruit) and juices, green peppers, broccoli, potatoes
- **Vitamin E:** Eggs, whole grains, vegetable oils, sunflower seeds
- **Lutein:** Spinach, corn, kale, broccoli, Brussels sprouts
- **Fatty acids:** Coldwater fish, such as salmon, mackerel, and rainbow trout; sunflower oil, corn oil
- **Zinc:** Meat, poultry, fish, whole grains, dairy products

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Dennis Gierhart, PhD
Chief Scientific Officer & Chairman of ZeaVision, LLC

What is macular pigment?

Macular pigment functions like internal sunglasses in the eye. It’s comprised of two yellow-orange pigments (zeaxanthin and lutein) that are obtained from the diet and collect in the macula of the retina.

These compounds are critical to protecting the eye by absorbing harmful blue light and working as antioxidants to control inflammation. Zeaxanthin is less common in the diet than lutein but perhaps the most critical nutrient for the eye.

Research has focused on macular pigment’s role in healthy vision and disease prevention of AMD and cataracts. Increasing the amount of macular pigment in the eye can also improve glare recovery and night driving, light sensitivity, contrast sensitivity, and dark adaptation. For example, a driver blinded by bright light may

regain focus several seconds sooner, improving driving safety.

How do you insure a healthy macular pigment?

Many studies suggest people could benefit by having their macular pigment measured, improving their diet, and taking zeaxanthin based supplements. Eye Care Professionals can determine levels in a simple two minute test with an MPOD measurement device.

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PANEL OF EXPERTS


	 John W. Lahr, OD, FAAO Divisional Vice President and Medical Director, EyeMed Vision Care	 Jean E. Ramsey, MD, MPH Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Pediatrics at Boston University School of Medicine	 Dr. Darrell Brautigam Optometrist, Southlake Eye Clinic; VSP Vision Care provider
Question 1: What are some risks one faces by neglecting eye health?	A comprehensive eye exam can detect serious vision issues such as glaucoma and eye cancers, which can lead to loss of vision and, eventually, blindness. A thorough eye exam by an optometrist or ophthalmologist can also detect serious health conditions in their early stages: diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and many other major diseases that can be revealed in the eye structure. Early detection can support proper disease management through appropriate physician referrals. Even the most common eye and vision problems —nearsightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism —can impact a person's long-term health and productivity.	Many times an eye doctor can see things you can't. It's important to have your eyes examined as recommended by your eye doctor to make sure you can see clearly, but also to detect signs of eye disease and other health issues. An eye exam can detect the early signs of age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. Vision can be preserved in most cases if these diseases are detected and treated early.	Ignoring your eye health can rob you of your most precious sense—the sense of sight. Without invasive surgery, the eyes are the only location in the body where blood vessels can be observed, which can reveal a lot about your health. In addition to revealing sight threatening conditions such as glaucoma, cataracts and macular degeneration, eye exams can show signs of diabetes, hypertension and hardening of the arteries. Early detection is critical in treating all these conditions.
Question 2: Does a healthy lifestyle attribute to overall eye health?	Absolutely. Studies have shown that well-balanced diets that are low in fat and high in Omega 3s and antioxidants can help avoid the onset of early eye disease and degenerative conditions such as macular degeneration (deterioration of the retina), cataracts and ocular surface disorders. Avoiding smoking, alcohol and drug abuse reduces a number of eye health risks including those mentioned above and eye cancers. A healthy lifestyle includes protecting the eyes from harmful ultra-violet rays, which can lead to early degeneration such as cataracts. Eyeglasses and sunglasses should filter 100 percent of UVA, UVB and UVC rays.	A healthy lifestyle can help to ensure overall eye health. For example, studies show that smoking may increase your risk of developing both cataracts and macular degeneration. Lifetime exposure to ultraviolet light has also been associated with cataract development. It's important to remember that just as you protect your skin from the sun's ultra-violet rays, you should also protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses or other eyewear with UV protection, putting on a hat or by seeking shade.	Yes! Maintaining healthy eating habits, proper weight control and exercise may help prevent diabetes, as well as other health conditions that can affect your eyes. Careful attention to cholesterol levels may eliminate the need for medications which can cause problems in the eyes. Smoking can be harmful to eye health by increasing your risk for macular degeneration and may also cause an earlier onset of cataracts. Wearing sunglasses is also important for protecting your eyes from harmful UV rays which can lead to the formation of cataracts and macular degeneration.
Question 3: What are the steps to take to protect vision and keep eyes healthy?	The majority of Americans have vision benefits available through their employers and access to eye care providers in private practices and, in some plans, premier retail locations that offer convenient hours on nights and weekends. I recommend that everyone participate in a vision plan and undergo annual, comprehensive eye examinations. If your vision requires corrective lenses, wear the appropriate prescription eyewear and sunglasses or safety eyewear when appropriate. To help maintain the health of your eyes, live a healthy lifestyle with a balanced diet, and consider taking supplements that include lutein, Omega 3s and zeaxanthin.	In addition to scheduling regular eye exams, wearing sunglasses with ultra-violet protection can help prevent cataracts and retina damage. The simple act of wearing protective eyewear when working around the house or playing sports can also go a long way to prevent vision loss by protecting the eyes from injury.	There are many things you can do to protect your vision. Having annual eye exams is one of the most important things! Children should get eye exams at six months, between two and three years, just before kindergarten, and annually thereafter. Make sure your eyewear includes UV protection. Be sure to wear protective eyewear when doing yard work or working with power tools. Don't wear contact lenses more than the recommended time. If you're at risk for macular degeneration consider taking anti-oxidant vitamins with lutein on a daily basis. Finally, if you're a smoker, quit smoking!



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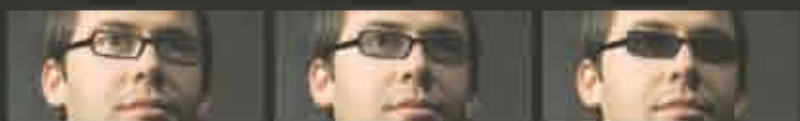
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