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# Eye Care

GUIDE

# Top Tips To Prevent Vision Loss

More than 150 million Americans suffer from some type of correctable vision loss, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Not all eye diseases or injuries can be prevented, but there are many good habits that can help you ensure optimal eye health. As always, consult with your local physician for any tips or recommendations that may be custom to your specific health situation.

Your eye doctor will be able to look over your history and give you guided advice to best care for your eyes and vision.

## PROTECT YOUR EYES

Looking to delay the development of cataracts? UV-blocking sunglasses can prevent retinal damage and keep your eyes in top shape. Sunglasses can also protect your sensitive eyelid skin to stave off wrinkles and skin cancer around the eye. When buying glasses, check for 100% UV protection.

Sunlight isn't the only potential danger to your eyes. The AAO estimates that about 2.5 million eye injuries occur in the U.S. each year. Home improvement projects or sports like baseball and hockey commonly cause eye injuries. Always wear protective glasses when there is chance of injury.



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## MAKE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHOICES

The body is like a complex machine. Every part works together to form the whole. So when you make poor dietary decisions or pick up bad habits like smoking, you can cause damage to your body, including your eyes.

Tobacco smoking is directly linked to many adverse health

effects, including age-related macular degeneration, according to the AAO. Studies have shown that smokers and ex-smokers are more likely to develop AMD than people who have never smoked.

When it comes to your diet, not getting enough vitamins from healthy foods can impair your retinal function. A variety of vegetables, especially leafy green ones, are an important

part of your diet.

Research also shows that people who eat diets with higher levels of vitamins C and E, zinc, lutein, zeaxanthin, omega-3 fatty acids DHA and EPA are less likely to develop early and advanced AMD, according to the AAO.

## CARE FOR YOUR CONTACTS

Follow your eye doctor's

instructions regarding the care and use of contact lenses, as improper usage can be a common culprit for eye injuries.

If you wear contacts, don't do these things:

Sleep in contacts that are not approved for overnight wear.

Use saliva or water as a wetting solution.

Use expired solutions.

Use disposable contact lenses beyond their wear.





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# Best Foods for Eye Health

Can what you eat impact how you see? Research from some of the most well-respected eye health organizations in the world says yes.

Organizations such as the American Optometric Association and the American Academy of Ophthalmology continue to recommend specific nutrients for eye health. The best part? Their recommendations come from all major food groups, making it easy for you to find an eye-healthy option to add to your diet.

Here is the list of the 10 foods recommended by these two organizations:

Fish; nuts and legumes; seeds; citrus fruits; leafy green vegetables; carrots; sweet potatoes; beef; eggs; and water.

## **FISH, NUTS AND SEEDS**

Many fish are rich sources of omega-3 fatty acids, including tuna, salmon, trout and herring. These rich, fatty options can help keep your eye health on track and can even reverse dry eye symptoms. Nuts and seeds are also rich in omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin E, which can help stave off age-related eye damage. Consider these nuts when filling up your gro-

cery cart: walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews and peanuts. These seeds also pack a positive punch when it comes to eye health: Chia seeds, flax seeds and hemp seeds.

## **FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

Citrus fruits are rich in vitamin C, which can help keep your eyes young and healthy. These fruit options include lemons, oranges and grapefruits. For vegetable fans, leafy green options are your best bet in finding eye-friendly vitamin C. Consider spinach, kale and collards when preparing your upcoming meal prep. Carrots and sweet potatoes are also a great option due to their heavy vitamin A and carotene concentrations.

## **BEEF AND EGGS**

Beef is rich in zinc, which can help delay age-related sight issues and macular degeneration. Chicken breast and pork loin also contain zinc, but at slightly lower levels. Eggs are a great source of lutein and zeaxanthin, which can also reduce the risk of age-related sight loss.

## **WATER**

Water may be one of the most important aspects of eye health. Fluid is essential to the overall longevity of your eyes because of dehydration's negative impact on vision. Drinking plenty of water, along with the aforementioned foods, can help with your eye health in the short and long-term.



# Choosing the Right Glasses

Buying a new pair of eyeglasses sure looks different than it did even five years ago. With so much to choose from in terms of lenses, frames and coatings, there are seemingly unlimited options on the eyeglasses market.

Working with your local eye doctor to find the best fit for you can be as simple as setting up an appointment and picking out your new stylish glasses. Follow these tips to walk out of your eye doctor's office seeing better and looking great.

## DESIGNS

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, here are the main eyeglass lens designs for you to consider when shopping for a new pair.

**Single vision lenses:** These are designed to correct distance vision and can be set to any focus.

**Bifocal lenses:** These utilize two sections to correct reading on the bottom half and distance on the top half.

**Trifocal lenses:** These feature three sections for distance vision, intermediate vision and near vision.

**Progressive lenses:** These have a smooth transition



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between distance and near vision and are oftentimes called no-line lenses because they have no visible dividing line.

## CONSIDER YOUR LIFESTYLE

Whether you're an athlete or a video gamer, there are eyeglass frames for every way of life. Think about your daily activities before visiting your eye doctor to pick out your new frames.

If you play a lot of sports, you may consider choosing a flexible frame that twists and bends without breaking. These durable glasses can help you stay in the game without worrying about an expensive repair or replacement.

Gamers can choose from various stylish frames that can enhance their experience while giving them better screen sight. Executives may consider modern options to give them a polished look,

while artists or musicians should look for fun, funky frames to help them express their creativity.

Basically, the possibilities are endless when it comes to finding the right frames for your everyday lifestyle.

## CAN COATINGS HELP?

Anti-reflective coatings can be added to your new glasses to help reduce glare and reflections. This can be especially helpful if you struggle

with seeing clearly while driving at night, when glare from headlights and streetlamps can cause visibility issues.

There are various tints that may help your vision in certain situations. Green and gray tints, for example, are helpful for cutting down on light while photochromic lenses actually change tints while you move from sunlight to indoors. These transition lenses can keep you from having to change glasses often.

# Finding the Right Eye Doctor

Choosing an eye doctor can be a challenging and intimidating experience if you haven't had an appointment recently. There are many kinds of eye experts who specialize in different areas, so who you choose should depend on your symptoms.

The two main types of eye doctors are optometrists and ophthalmologists. Optometrists can treat some eye diseases but do not perform surgery on the eyes. Ophthalmologists, on the other hand, treat all types of eye disease, prescribe medication and perform surgery on the eyes.

Don't be overwhelmed by the various specialties outside these two main doctors. With a little research, you can find a great local professional to meet your specific eye care needs.

## START WITH YOUR NETWORK

When starting your search, talk to your doctor or pediatrician. They will have a strong network of eye specialists to refer you to, especially if you are able to explain your specific symptoms. Referrals from people you trust are oftentimes the best source of high-quality



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medical professionals.

Aside from your doctor, you can also ask family, friends and coworkers where they have received care. You'll be surprised by how many step up with recommendations and suggestions for you.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR

Before selecting a long-term

eye doctor for your personal needs, here are some things to consider.

**Quality care:** Look for eye doctors that give you a comprehensive examination. You never want to feel rushed during your appointment. Talk to office staff about the average time patients typically wait when they arrive for their

checkup.

**Communication:** You want your eye doctor to listen closely to your questions and answer them clearly. A doctor who seems aloof or disconnected during your interaction is usually not a great first sign.

**Availability:** When it comes to available appointment times, find a practice that offers

evening and weekend hours. This can come in handy, especially if you have a busy professional or family schedule.

**Insurance:** You'll want to make sure your potential doctor accepts the health insurance you carry. The difference between covered and out-of-network insurance costs can be a major factor in your decision.