

Eye issues



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Contents



Why are our eyes important?



Eye diseases



Macular Degeneration (AMD)



Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP)



What to do?



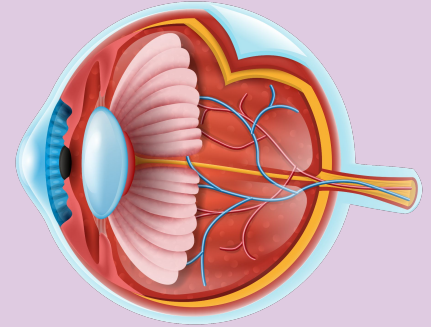
Prevention tips



Why are our eyes important?

Our eyes are one of the most important sensory organs, responsible for processing a significant amount of information, allowing us to understand our surroundings and interact with them. Medically speaking, the following points highlight why our eyes are so essential:

- **Foundation of Perception and Brain Processing**
- **Spatial Orientation and Safety**
- **Communication and Emotional Expression**
- **Early Detection of Diseases**
- **Support for Daily Activities**



Eye diseases

Most people are not well-informed about [macular degeneration](#) and [retinitis pigmentosa](#), two serious eye conditions that can lead to vision loss. Understanding what these conditions are, their symptoms, and how to respond is crucial for early detection and better management.



Macular degeneration (AMD)

- It affects the **macula**, the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, detailed vision.
- Symptoms include **blurred central vision**, difficulty recognizing faces, and dark spots in the visual field.
- It is more common in older adults (**Age-related Macular Degeneration, or AMD**).
- **Early detection** and lifestyle changes (e.g., healthy diet, quitting smoking) can help slow progression



Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP)

- RP is a rare, **genetic disorder** that affects the retina's light-sensitive cells, leading to **progressive vision loss**.
- Symptoms start with **night blindness** and a gradual loss of peripheral vision, often described as “tunnel vision.”
- There is currently no cure, but **vision aids**, genetic counseling, and research into gene therapies offer hope for better management.



Cataract

- A **cataract** is the clouding of the eye's natural lens, leading to blurry vision. It usually develops slowly and is common in older adults.
 - Symptoms include:
 - Blurry or cloudy vision
 - Sensitivity to light and glare
 - Difficulty seeing at night
 - Fading or yellowing of colors
 - Seeing halos around lights
 - Frequent changes in glasses prescription
 - The only **permanent cure** for cataracts is **surgery**, where the cloudy lens is replaced with an artificial one. If the cataract is mild, stronger lighting, anti-glare glasses, or updated prescriptions might help for a while.
- If you or someone you know is experiencing these symptoms, seeing an eye doctor (ophthalmologist) is the best step!



Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that damage the **optic nerve**, often due to **high eye pressure**. If untreated, it can lead to **permanent blindness**.

Symptoms of Glaucoma:

- **Open-Angle Glaucoma (Most Common Type):**
 - Gradual loss of peripheral (side) vision
 - Tunnel vision in advanced stages
 - No pain or early warning signs
- **Acute Angle-Closure Glaucoma (Emergency!):**
 - Sudden **severe eye pain**
 - Blurred vision
 - Halos around lights
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Red eye

There is **no cure**, but treatment can **slow or stop vision loss**. Options include:

Eye drops – Reduce eye pressure

Oral medications – Help drain fluid from the eye

Laser treatment – Improves fluid drainage

Surgery – Creates new drainage pathways



Usher Syndrome (1)

Usher syndrome is a rare genetic disorder that causes both **hearing loss** and **vision loss** (due to retinitis pigmentosa). It's one of the leading causes of combined hearing and vision impairment. There are **three types** (Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3), each with varying degrees of severity.

Symptoms of Usher Syndrome:

1. Hearing Loss:

- **Type 1:** Severe to profound hearing loss present from birth (congenital).
- **Type 2:** Moderate to severe hearing loss at birth.
- **Type 3:** Progressive hearing loss, usually beginning in late childhood or adolescence.

2. Vision Loss:

- Night blindness (difficulty seeing in low light or dark conditions).
- Progressive loss of peripheral vision (tunnel vision).
- Decreased visual acuity over time.

3. Balance Problems (in some forms, particularly Type 1):

- Difficulty with balance and coordination due to **vestibular dysfunction** (a part of the inner ear responsible for balance).



Usher Syndrome (2)

Currently, there is **no cure** for Usher syndrome, but there are treatments that can help manage the symptoms:

1. **Hearing aids or cochlear implants:** These devices can help with hearing loss.
2. **Vision aids:** Magnifiers, special glasses, and low-vision training can help with vision loss.
3. **Gene therapy:** Research is ongoing, and promising advances in gene therapy might help treat the underlying causes of Usher syndrome in the future.
4. **Physical therapy:** For balance and coordination issues, physical therapy may help improve mobility.

Early detection of Usher syndrome allows for intervention and support for both hearing and vision loss.

If you or someone you know is affected by Usher syndrome, it's important to work closely with healthcare professionals and support organizations to manage the condition.



What to do?



SEEK EARLY DIAGNOSIS

Regular eye exams are essential, especially if you notice changes in vision or have a family history of these conditions.



UTILIZE SUPPORT RESOURCES

Vision aids, support groups, and adaptive technologies can significantly improve quality of life.



ADAPT LIFESTYLE








Proper diet, supplements, and protective eyewear can help slow progression.



CONSULT SPECIALISTS

An ophthalmologist or retinal specialist can provide diagnosis and treatment options.

Prevention tips

-  **Protect from UV:** Wear sunglasses and hats to shield your eyes.
-  **Manage Health Conditions:** Control diabetes and blood pressure.
-  **Avoid Digital Strain:** Use the 20-20-20 rule to rest your eyes.
-  **Seek Help Early:** Visit a specialist if you notice vision changes.
-  **Eat Well:** Include leafy greens, carrots, and fish for essential nutrients.
-  **Quit Smoking:** Reduces risk of serious eye conditions.
-  **Use Safety Glasses:** Prevent injuries during sports or work.

Maintaining eye health is not only vital for preserving our vision but also for ensuring overall quality of life. A healthy lifestyle, regular eye check-ups, and adopting good habits can help us enjoy clear vision for many years.



Useful Resources



Use the section “Health Library” at **Cleveland Clinic** website where you can search for symptoms, diseases, treatments and procedures for the whole body health

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health>



Use the sections “Global” and “Region” at **WHO website** to learn more about health topics and data in different continents

<https://www.who.int/>



More videos to learn more about eye problems and your whole body at **FreeMedEducation** Youtube Channel, use the video playlist Eye/Ophthalmology at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0cbPczYKTQZdw-L5-UnLfcfGQ17an1qU>



TO FIND OUT MORE

