

Tips for Preventing Low Vision and Macular Degeneration as You Age

Low vision, which affects older adults, differs from normal age-related vision changes and is usually caused by diseases and health conditions such as macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetes, eye injuries or birth defects. Unlike more common vision problems, low vision is not considered correctable.

Today, age-related macular degeneration, or AMD, is the leading cause of vision loss and blindness among Americans who are age 65 and older. Therefore, it is imperative for older Americans to recognize the warning signs and take preventive measures, including having regularly scheduled eye examinations.

Primary Risk Factors

In addition to individuals over the age of 60 and those with a family history of AMD, the key risk factors include:

- Skin Color – Caucasians have a higher rate of AMD
- Gender – Females have a higher rate of AMD, although it may be because they live longer
- Eye Color – Having light-colored eyes
- Habits – Smoking, high levels of sun exposure
- Health Issues – Such as heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and obesity
- Diet – Poor with a low intake of antioxidants

Recognizing the Warning Signs

Low vision progress gradually. Therefore, it can be difficult for senior adults to recognize the symptoms. However, vision specialists advise that you should see your doctor if you notice any of the following signs:

- Difficulty in recognizing familiar faces
- Inability to read street signs or names on buildings
- Difficulty in doing close work such as reading, cooking or sewing
- Trouble doing normal tasks because the light seems too dim

Tips for Preventing Age-Related Macular Degeneration

In addition to having regular eye exams, it is recommended that you do the following:

- Avoid smoking
- Eat plenty of dark, leafy green vegetables, such as raw spinach
- Eat fish or take a fish oil supplement and eat fruit and nuts daily



- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight
- Limit your intake of refined carbohydrates ([high-glycemic index foods](#))
- Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol under control
- Wear sunglasses outdoors to block UV and blue light that may cause eye damage
- Take a balanced multivitamin/multimineral supplement, such as Centrum Silver, unless your doctor advises otherwise
- If you already have AMD, ask your doctor about one of the [AREDS formulations](#) or other supplements specially formulated for macular health

If you are already living with low vision, the **American Academy of Ophthalmology** claims that there are many devices specifically designed to help you function better. These include various magnifying devices, electronic books, e-book readers and audio books. Visit [SmartSight: Making the Most of Remaining Vision](#) for more information.

***Live Vibrantly!* at Provident Village at Creekside**

At Provident Village at Creekside, we believe vibrant days ensure bright tomorrows, so we've created a community where seniors, quite simply, [Live Vibrantly!](#) Whether it's in our [Assisted Living Community](#) or [Memory Care Neighborhood](#), each day we celebrate the individuality and strengths of each resident.

At Provident Village, to *Live Vibrantly!* means that days are filled with joy, vitality, growth and security. It means residents are socially active and personally empowered, with access to the personalized care and support they need to live fully. It means residing in a community where [intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual and physical care](#) are seamlessly integrated into everyday life.

We invite you to [visit us](#) and see for yourself!