Age-Related Eye Diseases and Conditions
See Well for a Lifetime
Vision Changes

- You may notice vision changes with aging.
- Many changes are common and can often be corrected.
- As you get older, you are at higher risk of age-related eye diseases and conditions.
Get Your Eyes Examined

- Everyone aged 50 or older should have a comprehensive dilated eye exam.
- Your eye care professional can tell you how frequently you need to have one.
What is a Comprehensive Dilated Eye Exam?
The Dilated Eye

**UNDILATED PUPIL**

- **RETINA**: Portion of retina that can be seen through undilated pupil.
- **RAY OF LIGHT**
- **OPTIC NERVE**
- **PUPIL**

**DILATED PUPIL**

- **RETINA**: Portion of retina that can be seen through dilated pupil.
- **RAY OF LIGHT**
- **OPTIC NERVE**
- **PUPIL**
Eye Diseases and Conditions

- Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)
- Cataract
- Diabetic eye disease
- Glaucoma
- Dry eye
- Low Vision
Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

- What is it?
  - Common among people aged 60 or older.
  - Can damage the macula, which is needed for sharp, detailed central vision.
AMD

- Who is at higher risk?
  - The greatest risk factor is age.
  - Other risk factors
    - Smoking.
    - Family history.
    - Obesity.
    - Race. Caucasians are more likely to lose vision from AMD.
Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

Normal vision

Same scene as viewed by a person with AMD
AMD

- Symptoms
  - No pain.
  - Blurred vision.
  - Drusen (can only be seen by an eye care professional).
AMD

- **Treatment options**
  - Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS) special vitamins/minerals supplement formulation.
  - Laser surgery.
  - Eye injections.
  - Photodynamic therapy.
AMD

What can you do?

- Eat a healthy diet
- Don’t smoke, or stop smoking
- Maintain normal blood pressure
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise
Cataract

- What is it?
  - Clouding of the eye’s lens that causes loss of vision
Cataract

- Who is at higher risk?
  - Most cataracts are related to aging
  - Other risk factors
    - Diabetes
    - Smoking
    - Exposure to sunlight
Cataract

Normal vision

Same scene as viewed by a person with cataract
Cataract

- Symptoms
  - Cloudy or blurred vision.
  - Colors that may not appear as bright as they once did.
  - Glare.
  - Poor night vision.
Cataract

- Treatment options
  - Glasses
  - Better lighting
  - Surgery
Cataract

What can you do?
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Wear sunglasses and a brimmed hat when outdoors.
- Don’t smoke.
Diabetic Eye Disease

- What is it?
  - A group of eye problems associated with diabetes.
  - Diabetic retinopathy is a leading cause of vision loss and blindness.
Diabetic Eye Disease

- Who is at higher risk?
  - People with diabetes.
  - The longer someone has diabetes, the more likely it is he or she will get diabetic retinopathy.
Diabetic Retinopathy

Normal vision

Same scene as viewed by a person with diabetic retinopathy
Diabetic Eye Disease

- **Symptoms**
  - No early warning signs or symptoms
  - Early detection and timely treatment can reduce the risk of vision loss.

- **Treatment options**
  - Laser treatment
  - Surgery
Diabetic Eye Disease

What can you do?

- Control your ABCs - A1C, blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Take your medications as directed.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise.
- Don’t smoke.
- Have a dilated eye exam at least once a year.
Glaucoma

What is it?

- A group of eye diseases that can damage the optic nerve in the eye.
- Glaucoma can develop in one or both eyes.
- Primary open-angle glaucoma is the most common form.
Glaucoma

- Who is at higher risk?
  - Anyone can develop glaucoma.
  - People with a family history of glaucoma.
  - In the United States:
    - African Americans over age 40.
    - Everyone over the age of 60.
Glaucoma

Normal vision

Same scene as viewed by a person with glaucoma
Glaucoma

- Symptoms
  - No early warning signs or symptoms
  - No pain
  - Loss of side vision

- Treatment options
  - Medications, usually eye drops
  - Laser or conventional surgery
Glaucoma

What can you do?

- People at a higher risk should get a comprehensive dilated eye exam every one to two years or as instructed by your eye care professional.
Dry Eye

What is it?

- The eye does not produce tears properly.
- Tears evaporate too quickly.
- Inflammation of the surface of the eye may occur along with dry eye.
Dry Eye

- Who is at higher risk?
  - Women often experience dry eye more than men.
  - Dry eye can occur at any age.
  - Older adults frequently experience dryness of the eyes.
Dry Eye

- **Symptoms**
  - Stinging or burning of the eye.
  - Feeling as if sand or grit is in the eye.
  - Episodes of excess tears following dry eye periods.
  - A stringy discharge from the eye.
  - Pain and redness of the eye.
  - Episodes of blurred vision.
Dry Eye

- **Symptoms (Continued)**
  - Heavy eyelids.
  - Decreased tearing or inability to shed tears when crying.
  - Uncomfortable contact lenses.
  - Decreased tolerance to any activity that requires prolonged visual attention.
  - Eye fatigue.
Dry Eye

- Treatment options
  - Using artificial tears, prescription eye drops, gels, gel inserts, and ointments.
  - Wearing glasses or sunglasses.
  - Getting punctal plugs.
Dry Eye

- What can you do?
  - Use an air cleaner to filter dust
  - Avoid dry conditions
  - Use lubricating eye drops
  - Visit an eye care professional
Low Vision

- What is it?
  - A visual impairment that is not corrected by standard eyeglasses, contact lenses, medication, or surgery.
  - It interferes with the ability to perform everyday activities.
Low Vision

- Who is at higher risk?
  - People with eye disease.
  - Some people develop vision loss after eye injuries or from birth defects.
Low Vision

- Treatment options
  - Vision rehabilitation.

- What can you do?
  - See a specialist in low vision.
  - Talk to your eye care professional about vision rehabilitation.
  - Use low vision devices.
Clinical Trials

- Talk to your eye care professional about participating in a clinical trial.
- To learn more about clinical trials, visit [www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov)
Review

- As you age, you are at higher risk of age-related eye diseases and conditions.
- Have a comprehensive dilated eye exam to detect eye diseases in their early stages.
- Questions?
Where To Get More Information

National Eye Institute (NEI)

- Visit the Aging Eye Web site: www.nei.nih.gov/agingeye
- Or call NEI at 301-496-5248

Lions Clubs International

- Visit the Lions Clubs International Web site: www.lionsclubs.org
- Or send an e-mail to: programs@lionsclubs.org