



## Deteriorating Visual Field May Indicate Low Vision—Solutions Are Available

(NAPSA)—Have you ever looked at a telephone pole and noticed it to be less than straight? Have you detected a loss of your peripheral vision, making it easier for people to startle you or making driving with confidence more difficult?

As you age, your eyes get older, too. And as your eyes get older, your risk for low vision and low vision—causing eye diseases increases. Low vision is common amongst people in their senior years. Once vision is lost by diseases such as glaucoma, macular degeneration or diabetic retinopathy, it often cannot be restored. Vision can, however, be preserved, and with a few changes in lifestyle and the use of low vision devices, living independently with low vision can be both safe and fulfilling.

### What Is Low Vision?

“Low vision is a visual impairment that cannot be corrected with eyeglasses, contact lenses, pharmaceuticals or surgery,” explained Dr. Paul Michelson, Chair of The Vision Council’s medical arm, the Better Vision Institute, as well as a low vision medical expert. “More likely than not, everyone knows someone with low vision.”

At first, you might notice a bit of distortion in your vision. Something that is a straight line in reality—a telephone pole, for example—may appear to curve to a person with low vision. Low vision can impair the ability to complete activities of daily living or follow routines and enjoy pastimes—such as reading—that people take for granted. It is a common ailment for adults 60+ and seniors who may be aging in place. Low vision is often coupled with a diagnosis of age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy or glaucoma.

Low vision differs from presbyopia, which is when the ability to focus on near objects simply diminishes. Signs of low vision are broader and include:

- Areas of blurred or distorted vision or spots and blotches in your vision
- Shadowed or darkened field of view or noticeable loss of peripheral vision
- A gradual loss of central vision

What is  
**LOW VISION?**



THE VISION COUNCIL  
**LOW VISION** DIVISION

[www.whatislowvision.org](http://www.whatislowvision.org)



**Low vision, often caused by macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and other eye conditions, can be treated by an eye care provider.**

- Cloudy and blurred vision or exaggerated “halos” around bright lights
- Blind spots in your field of view.

Seeing an eye doctor at the first sign of any visual change can help to detect the diseases that result in low vision and is an important step in maintaining good vision. Sometimes there is a pharmaceutical or surgical solution to stop further progression of one of the diseases associated with low vision. There are also eye care providers who specialize in low vision devices. These specialists can help their patients with low vision devices such as stand magnifiers, closed-circuit TVs and telescopic lenses to help them maintain independence and improve their ability to perform daily tasks.

Dr. Michelson also pointed out, “We urge people to check on family, friends and neighbors who might be experiencing some of the signs of low vision. Vision training, vision rehabilitation and low vision devices can help people maintain and optimize visual function, and preserve as much sight as is possible.”

With the goal of raising awareness about symptoms of low vision and finding available resources, The Vision Council created a new website. “The information and resources on this new website can teach people more about the changes they are experiencing. Catching the symptoms of low vision early may help sight be preserved and, in some cases, lessen the advance of low vision,” added Dr. Michelson.

### Where To Learn More

To learn more about low vision and find resources, visit [www.whatislowvision.org](http://www.whatislowvision.org).