

## Top Five Tips To Save Your Vision: EyeCare America Encourages Prevention And Early Detection

(NAPSA)—Many people take their vision for granted, but what if you started to lose your peripheral vision, developed a black spot in the center of your visual field, or even went blind altogether? For almost 4 million American seniors living with serious vision loss or blindness, these and other vision challenges can make it difficult to enjoy life's simple pleasures such as reading, playing cards or watching grandchildren grow. Vision loss can also make it difficult to live independently, work or drive.

Not all eye diseases can be prevented, but certain lifestyle choices can help you keep your vision healthy. To protect healthy vision, ophthalmologists—eye physicians and surgeons—encourage seniors to follow these top five tips to safeguard vision:

**1. Get an eye exam.** To protect healthy vision, seniors age 65 and older should have a dilated eye exam every one to two years or as recommended by their ophthalmologist. Visit [www.eyecareamerica.org](http://www.eyecareamerica.org) to find out if you or a loved one qualifies for an eye exam at no out-of-pocket cost with one of EyeCare America's volunteer ophthalmologists.

**2. Know your family history.** Eye diseases such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and glaucoma can run in families, so it's important to know your family's history of eye disease and talk to your ophthalmologist about any possible genetic risk factors.

**3. Don't smoke.** Tobacco smoking is directly linked to many adverse health effects, including cataracts and AMD. Studies show that current smokers and ex-smokers are more likely to develop AMD than people who have never smoked.



**Certain lifestyle choices can help you keep your vision healthy.**

**4. Eat right.** A variety of vegetables, especially leafy green ones, are an important part of an eye-healthy diet. Researchers have found that people on diets with higher levels of vitamins C and E, zinc, lutein, zeaxanthin, and omega-3 fatty acids DHA and EPA are less likely to develop early and advanced AMD. For delicious recipes that incorporate these essential nutrients, EyeCare America offers a free, downloadable cookbook called "Feast Your Eyes on This!"

**5. Protect your eyes from injuries.** An estimated 2.5 million eye injuries occur in the U.S. each year, so it is critical to wear proper eye protection to prevent eye injuries, especially during home projects like gardening and cleaning. Eye injuries can also be prevented by securing loose rugs, railings or other hazards that could cause falls or slips.

Seniors age 65 and older are at the greatest risk for eye disease and

vision loss, and because diseases like AMD and glaucoma often have no early symptoms, comprehensive eye exams are especially important. EyeCare America provides care at no out-of-pocket cost to seniors age 65 and older through its corps of volunteer ophthalmologists across the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

EyeCare America is designed for people who:

- Are U.S. citizens or legal residents;
- Are age 65 and older;
- Have not seen an ophthalmologist in three or more years; and
- Do not belong to an HMO or receive eye care benefits through the VA.

To see if you or a loved one age 65 or older is eligible, visit [www.eyecareamerica.org](http://www.eyecareamerica.org). EyeCare America is co-sponsored by the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc., with additional support provided by Alcon. The program is endorsed by state and subspecialty ophthalmological societies.