

# Eye Care America

## Untreated Vision Loss Can Speed Cognitive Decline

(NAPS)—There's a reason you shouldn't skip your routine eye exam—and many people don't even know about it. A growing body of research shows that vision loss can affect how well your brain works. The most recent study found that people who scored poorly on vision tests were more likely to suffer from deficits in memory, language and the ability to identify and locate objects in space. To protect your brain, get an eye exam to make sure correctable vision problems are detected and treated. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends all adults receive a comprehensive eye exam by age 40, and every year or two after age 65.

### Why Check Your Eyes

Here are three more reasons to get your eyes examined:

1. The leading causes of blindness—including glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration—can begin without any noticeable symptoms. The best way to protect your vision is to see an ophthalmologist, a physician who specializes in medical and surgical eye care.

2. Seeing an ophthalmologist can improve your overall health. Blood vessels and nerves in your eyes are reflective of the rest of your body. Ophthalmologists are sometimes the first to diagnose systemic diseases, such as diabetes, multiple sclerosis or vitamin deficiencies. For example, when David Hibler, Sr. went to get his eyes checked, his ophthalmologist detected signs of a blood clot just by looking into his eyes. Seeing



**Getting a thorough eye exam can solve some surprising health matters for many people.**

an ophthalmologist helped save Hibler's life, as it led him to get appropriate medical attention to avoid a potential stroke.

3. Some adults shouldn't wait until they are 40 to have a complete eye exam. See an ophthalmologist now if you have an eye disease or risk factors such as:

- diabetes
- high blood pressure
- family history of eye disease.

### EyeCare America Can Help

If the cost of an eye exam is a concern, the American Academy of Ophthalmology's EyeCare America program may be able to help. This national public service program provides eye care through volunteer ophthalmologists for eligible seniors 65 and older and those at increased risk for eye disease.

### Learn More

For further information regarding EyeCare America and to see if you or someone you care for can qualify, visit [www.aao.org/eyecare-america](http://www.aao.org/eyecare-america).