

Five ways to protect your eye health

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(HealthDay)—Your risk of vision problems increases with age, but there are things you can do to protect your sight, eye doctors say.

By age 65, one in three Americans will have a vision-impairing [eye disease](#). But early treatment of many of these conditions can slow or halt vision loss, or even restore normal vision, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

To help save your sight, the academy recommends the following:

- **Get checked.** Have a thorough medical eye exam by age 40, when early signs of disease or changes in vision may begin without any symptoms.
- **Know your risk.** It's important to find out about your family history, because certain eye diseases can be inherited. For example, if you have a close relative with [macular degeneration](#), you have a 50 percent chance of developing the disease. A [family history](#) of glaucoma increases your risk of that condition by four to nine times.
- **Eat right.** Protecting your vision is another good reason to stick to a healthy diet that's low in fat and high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Eye-healthy foods include citrus fruits, vegetable oils, nuts, dark green leafy vegetables and cold water fish—such as mackerel, salmon or cod.
- **Don't smoke.** Smoking increases the risk of eye diseases, such as cataracts and [age-related macular degeneration](#). It also raises the risk for cardiovascular diseases that can harm your eye health. Tobacco smoke, including secondhand smoke, also worsens dry eye.
- **Wear sunglasses.** Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light increases the risk of eye diseases such as cataracts, fleshy growths on the eye and cancer. Always wear sunglasses with 100 percent UV protection while outdoors, as well as a hat.

More information: SOURCE: American Academy of Ophthalmology,

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The U.S. National Eye Institute has more on [eye health](#).

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