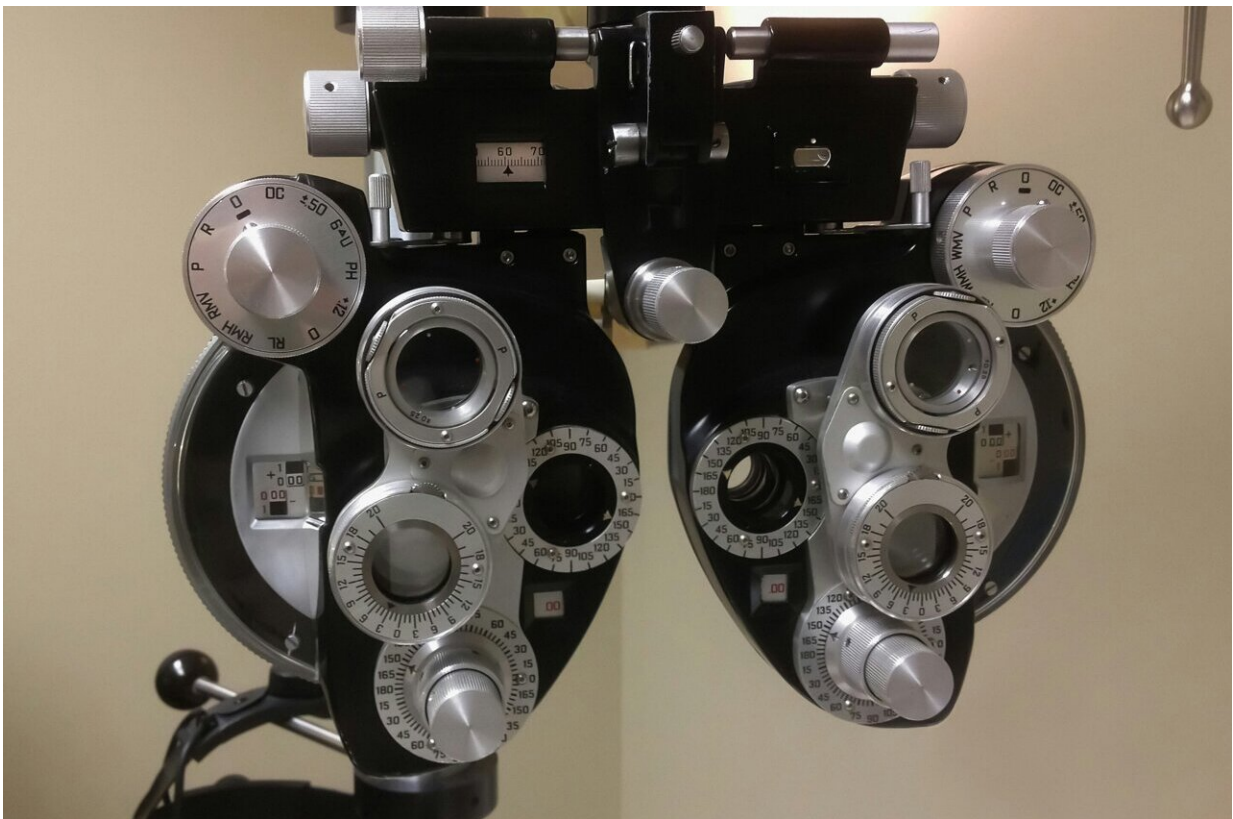


Struggling with low vision? Learn how to reduce your risk for eye disease

March 11 2024, by Christian Meyer



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"Low vision" is a term that commonly means partial sight, or sight that isn't fully correctable with glasses, contact lenses, surgery or medications. Low vision can affect people of all ages, but the risk increases as you get older.

Common signs/symptoms of low vision include:

- Not recognizing faces of family or friends
- Difficulty reading, cooking, sewing or doing other household chores
- Trouble selecting and matching colors of your clothes
- Needing brighter lighting or lights seeming dimmer than usual
- Not able to read traffic signs or store names

If you experience any of these symptoms while wearing contacts or glasses, you may be at risk for eye disease or low vision.

A common cause of low vision in people aged 55 and older is age-related macular degeneration (AMD). AMD is an eye disease that blurs your central vision by damaging the retina. Cellular death/damage within the retina often results in reduced vision and is irreversible.

How can I lower my risk for AMD?

- Exercise regularly
- Maintain healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Don't smoke
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Wear sunglasses and protective eye wear while doing activities
- Practice good hygiene when caring for [contact lenses](#)

In addition to AMD, other common causes for low vision are glaucoma, cataracts and [diabetic retinopathy](#). According to the National Eye Institute, symptoms for these conditions include:

- Glaucoma: Intense eye pain, nausea and vomiting, a red eye, headaches, tenderness around the eyes, seeing rings around lights and blurred vision.
- Cataracts: Cloudy vision, faded colors, poor night vision, halo around lights and seeing double.
- Diabetic Retinopathy: Distorted vision, new color blindness, night blindness, small dark spots or streaks in vision and trouble reading or seeing far away objects.
- AMD: Blurry vision, difficulty recognizing [familiar faces](#), blind spots, loss of central vision.

These four conditions affect roughly 120 million people worldwide, however there are many others with low vision that live in communities that do not have access to eye care.

Some things you can do at home if you notice your vision is starting to get worse are using larger print when reading, improving the lighting in your home or office and using high contrast lighting while reading and writing.

If you are concerned that you have low vision, contact your primary care provider. A great way to stay on top of your eye health is to get a yearly eye exam. This will increase the chance of an [early diagnosis](#) for eye disease. Early diagnosis and preventative eye care may lower the risk of developing low vision. If you notice changes to your eyesight, visit your eye care professional as soon as possible.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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