

September

# Healthy Aging Month

## 5 eye health conditions to look out for as you age

As we reach our 40s and 50s, we face an increased risk for new vision challenges. Fortunately, most age-related vision issues are preventable and treatable if you take simple steps to protect your eyes.

### 1—Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

AMD impacts the macula, a spot at the center of the retina. The retina itself is a layer of tissue in the back of your eye that is made up of light-sensitive cells. With the retina's help, you can see light. Those with age-related macular degeneration lose the central part of their vision and may also find that straight lines seem curved and colors seem darker.

### 2—Cataracts

Cataracts are a cloudiness that develops on the lens of the eye. Just like a camera lens, your eye lens helps you focus light to see better. The lens doesn't work well when cloudy, so the result is a world that appears out of focus.

### 3—Diabetic retinopathy

The leading cause of blindness among middle-aged (30s–50s) adults is diabetic retinopathy. Diabetes causes blood vessels to swell and leak. New, abnormal blood vessels form on the retina. Over time, the retina will lose its ability to process light signals.

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### 4—Glaucoma

With glaucoma, a buildup of pressure behind the eye causes damage to the optic nerve. If this pressure is allowed to build and remain, it will cause vision loss.

### 5—Dry eye

Dry eye occurs when tear production is no longer sufficient to keep your eyes lubricated. This lubricant not only makes your eyes more comfortable, but it also protects your vision. Dry eye has many causes, including a lack of vitamin A or living in a very arid or windy environment, among others.

Sources: All About Vision, AAO, AOA, Glaucoma.org, NIH.gov



### Regular eye exams are important

Eye exams aren't just for correcting vision issues. They are also key in the early detection of systemic diseases like diabetes and hypertension. Your eye exam is one of the most important preventative care services available to you.