



Committed to your health and our community Healthy Vision Awareness Month

Make Your Eye Health a Priority and Learn How to Protect Your Vision



May is [Healthy Vision Month](#), a national eye health observance established by the [National Eye Institute](#) (NEI) in May 2003. NEI is part of the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

This year, NEI is encouraging women to make eye health a priority and has designated four women as ambassadors – including Vision Aware [Audrey Demmitt](#) – who share their experiences with eye health and their tips on making eye health a

priority. You can read [Audrey's story](#) on the Healthy Vision Month [Ambassadors page](#).

As part of Healthy Vision Month, NEI also provides information about a number of steps all Americans can take to protect our eyes and vision:

- Get a comprehensive dilated eye exam.
- Know your family history, including any family history of eye problems.
- Wear sunglasses.

Sunglasses help protect your eyes from ultraviolet (UV) rays. Prolonged exposure to sunlight can increase your risk of [cataracts](#) and [macular degeneration](#). When buying sunglasses, look for those that block out 99 to



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Sunday, May 10
Mother's Day 2020



Things to do with or for your mom
on Mother's Day

- I. Make her a meal
- II. Take her to the zoo
- III. Give her a day at the spa
- IV. Take her on a picnic
- V. Or to see a movie
- VI. Go for a hike
- VII. Work with her in the garden
- VIII. Go to a museum

- 100 percent of both UVA and UVB rays.
- Use protective eyewear. Protect your eyes when doing household chores or yardwork, playing sports, or working on the job. Wear safety glasses, goggles, shields, or eye guards made of polycarbonate. Talk with your eye care provider about the right kind of protective eyewear for your needs.
- Live a healthy lifestyle, including eating healthy foods; maintaining a healthy weight; managing chronic conditions, such as [diabetes](#); and refraining from smoking.

According to NEI, “Taking these steps can help prevent vision loss or blindness from many eye diseases and conditions, including [macular degeneration](#), [cataracts](#), and [glaucoma](#). In addition, comprehensive dilated eye exams can detect problems early, when they’re easier to treat.” You can learn more about the steps to take

to protect your vision at [Keeping Your Eyes Healthy](#) at NEI’s Healthy Vision Month website.

What Is a Comprehensive Dilated Eye Examination?

A comprehensive dilated eye examination generally lasts between 30 and 60 minutes, and is performed by an [ophthalmologist](#) or [optometrist](#).

It should always include the following components:

1. A Health and Medication History

- Your overall health and that of your immediate family
- The medications you are taking (both prescription and over-the-counter)
- Questions about high blood pressure (hypertension), [diabetes](#), smoking, and sun exposure.

2. A Vision History

- How well you can see at present, including any recent changes in your vision
- Eye diseases that you or your family members have had, including [macular degeneration](#) and [glaucoma](#)

- Previous eye treatments, surgeries, or injuries
- The date of your last eye examination

As part of the vision history, the doctor may ask you the following questions:

- Are you having any problems with your vision?
- How long have you had these problems?
- When do these problems occur?
- When was your last eye examination?
- Do you have any family history of eye problems?
- How is your general health?
- What medications are you taking?
- Do you have any allergies?

This history of your own health and that of your family can give the doctor an indication of any issues that may be affecting, or could affect, your vision.

3. An Eye Health Evaluation

- An examination of the external parts of your eyes: the whites of the eyes, the [iris](#), [pupil](#), eyelids, and eyelashes.

- A [dilated eye examination](#) that uses special lenses that allow your doctor to see inside your eye and examine [the retina and optic nerve](#). Your doctor might choose to use eye drops to see the retina and optic nerve more clearly.
- A test of the [fluid pressure](#) within your eyes to check for the possibility of glaucoma.

4. A Refraction, or Visual Acuity Testing



A refraction helps determine the sharpness or clarity of both your near (reading) and distance vision. This includes testing your vision with different lenses (sometimes contained in a machine called a phoropter, pictured at right) to determine if your vision can be improved or corrected with regular glasses or contact lenses.

5. Visual Field Testing

Visual field testing helps determine how much side (or peripheral) vision you have and

how much surrounding area you can see.



The most common type of visual field test in a comprehensive eye exam is called a confrontation field test, in which the doctor briefly flashes several fingers in each of the four quadrants (above, below, right, and left) of your visual field while seated opposite you.

In some cases, your doctor may also want to perform a more precise visual field measurement, using a computerized visual field analyzer, such as the Humphrey Field Analyzer (pictured at left).

6. Your Examination Results

The doctor will be able to determine if the visual problems you are experiencing are normal age-related changes or are disease-related, and if additional testing, referral to another doctor or specialist, or treatments are needed. You can read more at [The Difference Between a Vision Screening and a Comprehensive Eye Examination](#) at Vision Aware.

Wearing Absorptive Sunglasses
Glare can be a major problem and concern for many persons.

Absorptive sunglasses help filter out bothersome glare and harmful light rays. Most sunglasses now block out ultraviolet light.

However, to block out “blue” light, which causes concern for [macular degeneration](#) and other eye conditions, sunglasses need to have some amount of yellow in them.

The colors of sunglasses that contain some yellow and block out blue light are amber, orange, amber/orange combination, plum, and yellow. Grey and green-grey colored sunglasses do not block out any blue light. Grey and green-grey sunglasses also do not provide as good contrast as do amber, orange, plum, and yellow.



Some advantages of absorptive sunglasses are:

- They can reduce bothersome glare, enhance or clarify vision in the sunlight, ease eye fatigue, and protect the eyes from

injuries, such as walking into a low-hanging branch.

- They block out harmful light rays. Most block out ultraviolet (UV) light, while amber, orange, plum, and yellow-colored sunglasses also block out blue light.
- Amber, orange, plum, and yellow-colored sunglasses also help enhance or increase contrast.
- Yellow-colored sunglasses are helpful for use indoors (reading, writing, doing handicrafts, using a computer) to reduce glare and enhance contrast.
- They are generally inexpensive and easy to obtain.
- They can be fitted over regular glasses, and they are available in clip-on or insert styles.
- Please note: Clip-ons and inserts are usually not as effective as fit-over or wrap-around styles, since they do not block light from the top and sides.

- It is recommended that you try on a range of colors and styles during the low vision examination to determine which color or colors work best for you.

You can read more at [Helpful Non-Optical Devices for Low Vision](#) at Vision Aware.

How to Locate an Eye Care Professional in Your Area

- The American Foundation for the Blind/Vision Aware Directory of Services has expanded their [listing of low vision service providers](#) to include independent service providers. Previously, the Directory listed only nonprofit low vision service providers.
- If you are a low vision service provider and would like to be included in the Directory, you can [sign up online](#). To learn if you are eligible for inclusion in the Directory of Services, see the [eligibility requirements](#). To learn about low vision services

that are available to you in your area, use Vision Aware [Directory of Services](#) to find help.

- Visit the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#) website and use their [Find an Ophthalmologist](#) online database to locate an ophthalmologist in your area.
- Visit the [American Optometric Association](#) website and use their [Find an Eye Doctor](#) online database to locate an optometrist in your area.

Additional Healthy Vision Information

- The [Healthy Vision Month](#) website
- The [Healthy Eyes Toolkit](#)

