

# What you should know about **vision and aging**



## **Older Adults Are At Risk For Specific Eye Problems**

**AMD** - The leading cause of vision loss in older Americans is Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD), which occurs when part of the retina deteriorates. The risk for AMD increases with age. More than 13 million Americans suffer from AMD, which affects the center of the vision and, as a result, impacts daily activities like driving, reading and doing close work.

**Cataract** – One of the most common vision ailments in older adults is a cataract, which affects about half of Americans age 65 and older, according to the National Eye Institute. In fact, cataract surgery is one of the most widely performed procedures in the United States. The American Academy of Ophthalmology reports that although persons between 52 and 65 have a 50% chance of getting a cataract, symptoms often don't show up until later. Regular eye exams can help identify and treat cataracts before they cause permanent blindness.

**Floaters** – Another common problem in older adults is “floaters,” or clusters of cells that have separated from the clear fluid inside the eye. About 25% of people experience floaters by their 60s, and about 65% of people experience them by their 80s, according to Harvard Medical School. It is important to have an eye examination if you have floaters, as they could be the result of a more serious condition like a detached retina.

# What you should know about **contact lenses**



## **Correct Your Vision Without Glasses**

Your doctor will help you determine if you are a candidate for contact lenses and the type of lenses appropriate for you. Some popular choices include:

**Conventional** - Conventional lenses can be rigid, gas permeable material or conventional soft lens material.

**Disposable/Frequent Replacement** - Replacing your contacts on a regular basis may be in your best interest. Your doctor will help you choose the type of lens best for the health of your eyes from monthly, weekly or daily replacement lenses.

**Bifocal** - These contact lenses correct for distance and near vision at the same time (just like bifocal glasses).

**Toric** - With a special curvature designed to correct for astigmatism, toric lenses are used when conventional soft or rigid lenses do not correct the defect.

**Colored or Fashion-Tinted Lenses** - Cosmetically tinted lenses are designed to enhance or change a person's eye color. They are very popular with people with light colored eyes and offer an excellent opportunity to change or enhance eye color.

Most DeltaVision plans cover conventional and disposable contact lenses, as well as fitting and follow-up fees. Refer to your plan for more information.

# What you should know about **glaucoma**



## **Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness in the United States.**

It typically affects people over the age of forty. Early signs may occur when the passages that filter and exchange fluid from within the eye become blocked, causing internal eye pressure to increase. Undiagnosed and untreated, this increased pressure can permanently damage the optic nerve. The chances of developing glaucoma are increased by family history, race, extreme nearsightedness or diabetes.

## **Symptoms**

Glaucoma tends to develop gradually and without symptoms. If there are symptoms, they may include minor blurring of vision, loss of central or peripheral vision, the appearance of colored rings around lights and eye pain or dull headaches.

## **Diagnosis and Treatment**

Glaucoma cannot be prevented, but it can, in most cases, be controlled. A comprehensive eye exam can detect the onset of glaucoma. Your eye care specialist will do further testing and may prescribe medication to control pressure inside the eye or recommend other forms of treatment, including laser or conventional surgery.

# What you should know about **children's vision**



## **Vision Awareness**

Eye exams are as important to children's health as regular check-ups at the pediatrician. Good vision is essential for the development of a child, both developmentally and academically. About 80% of learning in a child's first 12 years comes through the eyes <sup>(1)</sup>, and poor vision can slow a child's reading. In short, good vision is as essential as learning the ABCs.

## **The importance of eye exams**

To maximize development and learning, as well as to identify vision problems early, the American Optometric Association recommends that every child have a professional eye exam shortly after birth, by six months of age and again just prior to entering school. Once in school, children should receive annual eye exams. Unfortunately, more than 12.1 million school-age children in the United States have some form of vision problem, but as few as 14% of children receive an eye exam before entering first grade. <sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Check Yearly. See Clearly.

(2) Prevent Blindness America

# What you should know about **diabetes and your vision**



## **Diabetes Awareness**

Diabetes is a disease in which the pancreas cannot produce insulin or the body cannot use insulin efficiently. Insulin is needed to break down sugars and starches and turn them into energy for your body. The American Diabetes Association reports that 20.8 million people are afflicted with diabetes in the United States.

If diabetes is left untreated, eye diseases such as retinopathy (damage to the retina), cataract (clouding of eye lens) and glaucoma (increased fluid pressure in the eye) could develop, blurring vision and eventually causing blindness.

## **Symptoms**

The early symptoms of diabetic retinopathy may be hard to detect. Other vision impairments associated with diabetes are fluctuating vision, loss of central or peripheral vision and spots or flashes in front of the eye.

## **Diagnosis and Treatment**

With the pupil dilated, an ophthalmologist or optometrist can examine the retina for signs of eye disease including diabetic retinopathy. If diabetic retinopathy is detected, it can be treated by laser surgery. While there is no cure for diabetes or diabetic retinopathy, proper medication, close monitoring of blood sugar levels, a healthy diet and regular exercise help manage this disease and reduce the likelihood of vision-related complications.

# What you should know about **LASIK**



## **What is LASIK?**

LASIK is the most advanced procedure in correcting nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism. LASIK technology utilizes the excimer laser to lift a thin layer of the cornea to create a protective flap. The inner corneal tissue is gently reshaped, and the flap is returned to protect the area and promote quick healing.

## **How safe is the procedure?**

In 1995, after 10 full years of clinical trials, the FDA approved the use of the excimer laser in the U.S. Since its introduction, laser vision correction has passed the rigid safety standards and intensive scrutiny of public health agencies and medical professionals.

## **Am I a candidate for LASIK?**

If you are at least 18 years of age and are myopic (nearsighted), hyperopic (farsighted), or have astigmatism, you are a likely candidate. Only a qualified ophthalmologist can evaluate your eyes and approve you for surgery.

## **What results can I expect from LASIK?**

Patients receiving laser vision correction can expect to reduce or eliminate their need for glasses or contacts for distance vision. Reading glasses may be necessary for those who develop presbyopia as they approach their 40s.

All DeltaVision members receive a discount on LASIK.  
Call 1-877-5LASER6 to learn more.