September
Healthy Aging Month

5 eye health conditions to look out for as you age

As we reach our 40s and 50s, we face new vision challenges that may be just around the corner. 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 center of the retina, called the macula. The retina is a layer of tissue in the back of your eye. It's made up of cells that are sensitive to light. With the retina's help, you can see light. Those with the condition lose the center part of their vision.

People with this condition find that straight lines seem curved and colors seem darker. It makes it very difficult to do things you need to do.

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 become leaky. New, abnormal blood vessels form on the retina. Over time, the retina will lose its ability to process light signals.

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

Tear production may no longer be 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 the lack of vitamin A, 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

Did you know all of your body's veins and arteries end in your eye? That's why your eye exam is key in detecting early chronic and systemic diseases like diabetes and hypertension. Your eye exam is one of the most important preventative care services available to you.

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