

# Seniors Can Resolve To Have Healthier Eyes

As older Americans act on their annual resolutions in the New Year, taking control of eye health can be a tangible move to boost their quality of life. Family members also may help.

Some form of frequent exercise and eating certain healthy foods, vs a redundant diet that might neglect vital eye nutrients, are daily habits that can strongly influence vision.

Knowing warning signs for eye problems also are important.

Regular eye exams are essential.

“Seniors may take failing vision for granted and make adjustments for it. If they don’t notice their own eye problems, family members might.

“So the best is a two-pronged approach to develop healthy eye habits and to keep regular eye exams”, said ophthalmologist Rainna Bahadur, M.D., a partner at Eye Associates of the South.

The practice has clinics with optical shops in Biloxi, Ocean Springs and Gulfport.

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), patients need an eye exam at age 65 and

every year or two after – or follow your eye doctors recommendations for future exams.

“Don’t wait for a reason for an eye exam”, agreed ophthalmologist Debra LaPrad, M.D., whose practice focus includes glaucoma. “There are some serious eye problems that have no symptoms.

“Glaucoma, for example, can cause blindness – and may have no symptoms at all. Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent blindness.”

Oftentimes, older patients come in for new eye-glasses or contact lenses and other problems are found, such as cataracts, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy or age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Those especially at risk have high blood pressure, diabetes, smoke tobacco and/or have a family history of eye disease.

Both Bahadur and LaPrad also are cataract surgery specialists, including providing lens implants with vision correction and iStents for glaucoma patients needing cataract surgery.

Some of the physical signs that seniors may be having eye problems are: often bumping into objects; under or overreaching for objects; focusing to slowly walk down stairs; having trouble identifying colors, such as in choosing clothing; needing bright lighting throughout the home; squinting or reading up close; and giving up hobbies that require good vision, according to various ophthalmology sources.

If you smoke, stopping can be “a monumental improvement” to your eyes, Bahadur pointed out. After people quit smoking tobacco, their risk for some eye diseases becomes almost as low as for those who never smoked, according to studies cited by the AAO.

In short, a healthy vision diet includes keeping these

foods in the mix, various sources advised:

- Dark leafy greens (spinach, kale, romaine lettuce and greens)
- Fruits (citrus fruits rich in vitamin C and apricots and cantaloupe high in beta-carotene.)
- Vegetables (broccoli, peas, carrots, sweet potatoes.)
- Cold-water fish (salmon, tuna, halibut, sardines).
- Legumes (all kinds of beans).

Regular exercise also can help your eyes, LaPrad added. For example, a British Journal of Ophthalmology study found that exercising three times a week reduced the risk of developing wet AMD over 15 years by 70 percent.

Seniors shouldn’t wait another year for an annual eye exam if they have significant eye problems.

Sometimes, covering one eye to check each eye will show one eye has a hidden problem. See your eye doctor right away if you notice:

- Sudden vision loss or sudden change in vision
- Double vision
- Persistent pain in or around the eye
- Flashes of light or annoying floaters in one or both eyes
- Halos around lights at night
- Intense sensitivity to light
- A dark spot(s) or having an area of vision loss in one or both eyes
- Discharge or a foreign body in the eye
- Changes in the color of the iris or clarity of the cornea

For an appointment, call Eye Associates of the at (228) 396-5185 or visit their website at [www.2020view.com](http://www.2020view.com).