



Focus on Cataract

It is important for African Americans to maintain healthy vision because they are at higher risk for certain eye diseases that, if left untreated, can cause vision loss, even blindness. The good news is that vision loss can often be prevented.

This fact sheet contains information about a common eye disease – cataract – including the causes, symptoms, and what you can do to focus on your vision.

CATARACT

Two million African Americans have cataract, and this number is expected to reach more than 3 million by 2030.

What is it?

- A cataract occurs when the lens of the eye becomes cloudy due to proteins clumping together in the lens.

What causes it?

- Aging (cataract is more common among older people)
- Certain diseases, such as diabetes

- Personal behavior, such as smoking and drinking alcohol
- The environment, such as prolonged exposure to sunlight

What are the symptoms?

- Cloudy or blurry vision
- Colors seem faded
- Glare from headlights, lamps, or sunlight
- Poor night vision
- Double vision or multiple images in one eye
- Frequent prescription changes in your eyeglasses or contact lenses

Normal Vision

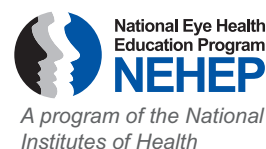


**Vision with
Advanced Cataract**



Write
the **Vision**

Make your plan to protect your sight.



How can you focus on your vision?

- Wear sunglasses and a hat with a brim when outdoors.
- Quit smoking or don't start.

Eat healthy foods, such as green leafy vegetables, fruits, and other foods with antioxidants.

HEALTHY VISION

Now that you know more about cataract and how to help prevent vision loss, here are some lifestyle tips to help you focus on your vision:

- Don't wait for problems with your eyes. Make comprehensive dilated eye exams part of your health routine.
- Know your family's eye health history. If eye disease runs in your family, you may be at higher risk.
- Eat a nutritious diet that includes leafy green veggies and fish, such as salmon, tuna, and halibut.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Control your diabetes if you have it.
- Quit smoking or never start.
- Protect your eyes when playing sports or doing yard work.
- Wear sunglasses when outside.



For more information on cataract and tips on protecting your vision, visit:

www.nei.nih.gov/health/cataract



National Eye Institute



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