

# HEALTHY VISION MONTH FACT SHEET



## What is Healthy Vision Month?

In 2003, the National Eye Institute established May as Healthy Vision Month. During this annual observance Americans are encouraged to make their eye health a priority and learn how to keep their eyes healthy and safe.

## Why is Healthy Vision Month important?

Healthy Vision Month is important because more than 23 million Americans age 18 and older have never had an eye exam, according to a national survey conducted by NEI. The reason: Most say they don't think they have an eye problem. In fact: Many eye diseases don't have symptoms in their early stages, so without an eye exam, they can't know. And there are worrying predictions: By 2030, 11.4 million people will have diabetic retinopathy, 4.2 million will have glaucoma, and 3.7 million will have age-related macular degeneration. Healthy Vision Month encourages people to take steps to protect their sight.

## What are five steps people can take to protect their vision?



**Get a Comprehensive Dilated Eye Exam:** It's the best way to know if your eyes are healthy and you're seeing your best. Talk to your eye care professional about how often you should have one.



**Live a Healthy Lifestyle:** Maintain a healthy weight and eat foods like fish and dark leafy green vegetables to lower your risk of eye disease. And don't smoke—it's as bad for your eyes as it is for the rest of your body.



**Know Your Family History:** Genes are a factor in eye disease, including diseases that are the leading causes of blindness. Talk to your family members about their eye health history.



**Use Protective Eyewear:** Safety glasses or goggles can protect your eyes at work and at play. Talk to your eye care provider about the right protective eyewear for your sport or job.



**Wear Sunglasses:** Protect your eyes by choosing sunglasses that block out 99 to 100% of both UVA and UVB radiation.

For more information, please visit [www.nei.nih.gov/hvm](http://www.nei.nih.gov/hvm).

## Who should participate in Healthy Vision Month?

Any individual or organization can observe Healthy Vision Month. NEI invites public and private organizations at the local, state, federal, and national levels to participate.

## How do I observe Healthy Vision Month?

- Encourage family and friends to take the five steps to protect their sight.
- Visit [www.nei.nih.gov/hvm](http://www.nei.nih.gov/hvm) to find tools and resources to help spread the word about the importance of eye health.
- Like the National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP) on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/NationalEyeHealthEducationProgram>.
- Follow @NatEyeInstitute and @NEHEP on Twitter.
- Share NEI's infocards on Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.com/neinih/infocards/>.