

# HEALTHY VISION MONTH

## FACT SHEET

### WHAT IS HEALTHY VISION MONTH?

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

### WHY IS HEALTHY VISION MONTH IMPORTANT?

More than 23 million Americans age 18 and older have never had an eye exam. The reason: Most say they don't think they have an eye problem. In fact, many eye diseases don't show symptoms in their early stages, so without an eye exam, they can't know. It is projected that 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.

### WHY FOCUS ON WOMEN'S EYE HEALTH?

Two-thirds of blindness and visual impairment occurs in women. Women are at greater risk because they: live longer; are at greater risk for autoimmune diseases; are more likely to undergo cancer treatments that may affect vision; and experience normal age-related hormonal changes that may affect their eyes.

### 5 STEPS TO KEEP YOUR EYES HEALTHY



Get a comprehensive **dilated eye exam**.



Use **protective eyewear** during sports and other recreational activities.



Know your **family's eye health history**.



Wear **sunglasses** that block out 99-100% of UVA/UVB rays.



Live a **healthy lifestyle**:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Eat healthy foods
- Don't smoke
- Manage chronic health conditions

### 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 CAN I GET INVOLVED IN 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.
- Show how you are taking steps to protect your vision by posting a selfie doing one of the five healthy vision steps with the hashtag **#Selfie4Sight!**
- Share NEI's infocards on Pinterest [www.pinterest.com/neinih/infocards/](http://www.pinterest.com/neinih/infocards/).
- Like the National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP) on Facebook [www.facebook.com/NationalEyeHealthEducationProgram](http://www.facebook.com/NationalEyeHealthEducationProgram).
- Follow @NatEyeInstitute and @NEHEP on Twitter.

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

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National Eye Institute