

AFRICAN AMERICANS

and Eye Health: Focus on Your Vision

African Americans are at higher risk for certain eye diseases, which usually have no warning signs. Left untreated, they can cause vision loss, even blindness. But vision loss can often be prevented.



DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

Diabetic retinopathy occurs when the blood vessels in the eye are damaged by diabetes.

APPROXIMATELY
828,000
AFRICAN AMERICANS
HAVE DIABETIC RETINOPATHY.

MAY EXCEED
1MIL.
BY 2030

How can you focus on your vision?

Keep your diabetes under control. Get a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year.



GLAUCOMA

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that can damage the optic nerve. Glaucoma affects side or peripheral vision first. African Americans are at higher risk, starting at a younger age.



How can you focus on your vision?

If you are 40 or older, have a comprehensive dilated eye exam every 1 to 2 years.

MORE THAN
520,000
AFRICAN AMERICANS
HAVE GLAUCOMA.

MAY EXCEED
860,000
BY 2030

LOW VISION

Low vision is when even with regular glasses, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery people have difficulty seeing, making everyday tasks difficult to do.

APPROXIMATELY
188,000
AFRICAN AMERICANS
HAVE LOW VISION.

MAY REACH
366,000
BY 2030

How can you focus on your vision?

- See an eye care professional as often as recommended.
- Learn about vision rehabilitation.
- Get a good support team that includes your primary eye care professional, a specialist in low vision, and rehabilitation specialists.



HEALTHY VISION TIPS

Here are some lifestyle tips to help you focus on your vision.

1 Get regular comprehensive dilated eye exams.

2 Know your family's eye health history.

3 Eat a nutritious diet.

4 Wear protective eyewear.

5 Maintain a healthy weight.

6 Quit smoking or never start.

7 Control your diabetes.

8 Wear sunglasses when outside.

For more information about eye health, visit www.nei.nih.gov/healthyeyes