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.

828,000
APPROXIMATELY
AFRICAN AMERICANS HAVE DIABETIC RETINOPATHY.
MAY EXCEED 1 MIL. 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.

520,000
MORE THAN
AFRICAN AMERICANS HAVE GLAUCOMA.
MAY EXCEED 860,000 BY 2030

How can you focus on your vision?
If you are 40 or older, have a comprehensive dilated eye exam every 1 to 2 years.

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

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