

eye *Facts and Fancies*

Taking A Look At Low-Vision Problems

(NAPSA)—A growing number of people with vision problems are seeing their way clear to maintain their independence. Increasingly, they are turning to resources and services designed to help people with vision problems continue their quality of life and, in some cases, even improve on it.

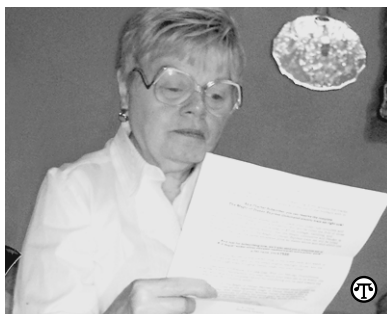
A person with low vision—irreversible changes in vision that cannot be corrected by standard eyeglasses—may miss sharpness of detail, lose the ability to distinguish color or lose depth perception.

Signs of low vision can include difficulty recognizing a familiar face; difficulty reading—print appears broken or distorted—and difficulty seeing objects and potential obstacles such as steps, curbs, walls and furniture.

Vision problems are an increasingly common challenge for many people as they age. According to Lighthouse International, one in six Americans over the age of 45 reports some vision impairment. In addition to the normal aging process, the four most common causes are macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts and diabetic retinopathy.

Fortunately, there is help, both for the vision impaired and for those who assist them as caregivers. Resources include strategies for daily living activities, such as cooking and home management.

There's also computer training and specialized software; mobility training, job counseling, and support groups to share information and experiences and reduce the sense of isolation. In addition, there are large-print books and low-vision optical aids.



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Another source of assistance is the Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation (RDPFS), which for 50 years has been serving the low-vision community. Its mission is to help the blind and visually impaired continue to live independently. It is also a major source of funding and support for other organizations serving the visually impaired.

The Foundation maintains a helpful Web site, www.ad.rdpfs.org, which has links to many organizations that offer services for the visually impaired and their caregivers.

RDPFS has also been a leader in the large print publishing business for over 40 years. Its current publication, Reader's Digest Select Editions Large Type is a paperback series of current fiction, romance, mystery, adventure and biography. Each volume contains two stories in easy-to-read large print. Over 70,000 people currently subscribe to this publication.

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