

Entering the Age of Longevity: Living to be 100 and Making Every Year Count

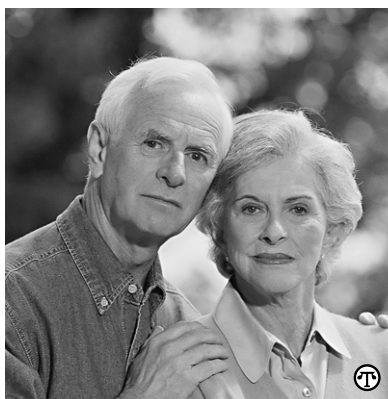
(NAPSA)—There are nearly 100 million people in the U.S. age 45 and older today. By 2010, this number will probably grow to 119.3 million. As this population increases, so does the life expectancy of this generation and the next. Research predicts that one third of all boys and one half of all girls recently born in developed countries will live to be 100. We have reached the age of longevity.

With people living longer, it has become more important than ever to protect overall health. The eyes—one of the most important parts of the body—are often forgotten. By age 45, everyone begins to experience vision changes due to aging, including difficulty focusing on near tasks like reading, difficulty distinguishing colors and contrast, and the need for more light. In the U.S. alone, 16.5 million people over age 45 report vision loss. By 2010, this number will grow to 20 million.

Macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in people over 50, is one disease that progresses with age, often with few or no symptoms. Because macular degeneration, also known as age-related macular degeneration or AMD, robs central vision it can affect normal everyday activities like recognizing faces, driving a car, reading, watching television, and identifying currency. Approximately 25 to 30 million people worldwide are affected by macular degeneration and the number is expected to triple over the next 25 years.

Here are four ways to “see” every year counts:

1.) See your eye doctor. To maintain your sight and protect against macular degeneration and other age-related eye diseases, it’s important to visit your eye doctor annually for an eye exam that tests for macular degeneration.



Treatment for macular degeneration is available, but early detection is the key to saving sight. Learn more at www.amdfacts.com.

2.) See your friends and family. Loss of sight can hinder the ability to see friends and family. Specifically, macular degeneration makes recognizing faces difficult. Sixty percent of Americans expect to enjoy life more, not less, as they age. The majority look forward to spending time with family and friends.

3.) See the rewards of a healthy diet. Recent research showed that people at a high risk of developing advanced stages of macular degeneration, reduced their risk of vision loss by 25 percent when taking high levels of certain vitamins and zinc. Alcohol may also deplete the body of antioxidants and high levels of saturated fats and cholesterol harm blood vessels and can contribute to macular damage.

4.) See the proven risks of smoking. Smoking is the only clinically proven risk factor for macular degeneration. Other potential risks include: genetics, cataracts, hypertension, sun exposure, farsightedness, light skin or eye color, and a diet low in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.

For more information about macular degeneration, visit www.amdfacts.com or call 800-AMD-4636.