

# Holiday Health Hints

## The Eyes Are Windows To Your Health

(NAPSA)—While most people wait until they feel sick to see a doctor, the key to saving sight is to catch eye diseases early—even before noticing any symptoms.

Eye diseases and conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, autoimmune diseases, and cancers can be diagnosed and detected during a simple eye exam. That's because the eye is the only place in the body where a doctor can have an unobstructed view of blood vessels, nerves and connecting tissue without any need for surgery. Abnormalities spotted in the eye may signal the same changes in other parts of the body.

Early detection can help people potentially avoid vision loss and other serious complications.

### Eye Exams Are a Simple Procedure that Could Save Your Sight

Adults age 65 or over should have a comprehensive eye exam every one to two years, or as recommended by an ophthalmologist—a physician who specializes in medical and surgical eye care. To help seniors who haven't seen an ophthalmologist in three or more years and are concerned about cost, the American Academy of Ophthalmology's EyeCare America program may be able to help.

EyeCare America's Seniors program connects eligible seniors with local volunteer ophthalmologists who provide a medical eye exam at no out-of-pocket cost, and up to one year of follow-up care for any condition diagnosed during the initial exam, for the physician services.

To be eligible, you must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or legal resident



### Make protecting your sight part of the celebration this holiday season.

- Be age 65 or older
- Not belong to an HMO or have eye care benefits through the VA
- Not have seen an ophthalmologist in three or more years.

Don't qualify for the Seniors program? You may be eligible for EyeCare America's Glaucoma program. It provides a glaucoma eye exam at no cost to those who are eligible and uninsured.

To be eligible, you must:

- Be at increased risk for glaucoma, determined by your age, race and family history
- Be a U.S. citizen or legal resident
- Not belong to an HMO or have eye care benefits through the VA
- Not have had an eye exam in 12 months or more.

EyeCare America has helped more than 1.8 million people since 1985. Its sight-saving services are made possible through the generous support of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation Inc., with additional support provided by Alcon. Visit [www.aao.org/eyecare-america](http://www.aao.org/eyecare-america) to learn more and determine whether you or a loved one qualifies.