

Eye Health

Regular Eye Exams Are Important For Seniors

(NAPSA)—Many seniors will be glad to learn that there are steps they can take to protect against vision problems—starting with an eye exam. A regular exam is key for seniors because some eye conditions and diseases do not show warning signs.

While it is commonly known that eye troubles increase rapidly with age—particularly after age 65—a lesser-known fact is that vision loss is also associated with a higher incidence of falls, injuries, depression and social isolation.

A Regular Examination

As part of an overall health-maintenance strategy, the American Academy of Ophthalmology urges seniors to have a comprehensive eye exam, especially if they have not had one in the past two years, whether or not there are symptoms.

The Academy also encourages seniors, their loved ones and caregivers to be aware of signs that indicate vision problems that require an eye exam.

These problems can include:

- Bumping into or knocking over objects
- Stepping hesitantly
- Squinting or tilting the head when trying to focus
- Missing objects when reaching
- Discontinuing everyday activities such as reading and writing.

Simple, painless eye exams are crucial in detecting an eye disease or condition in its early stages, to help preserve your sight. During the exam, an ophthalmologist—a medical doctor who specializes in eye care—will provide a diagnosis and treatment of all eye diseases and conditions.

Making Eye Care Available

Despite medical evidence that



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healthy vision plays a critical role in overall health and happiness, many older adults in the United States do not seek regular eye care or face difficulty accessing and paying for health care services.

To ensure that all seniors throughout the country have access to eye care services, nearly 7,000 volunteer ophthalmologists are available to provide eye care at no out-of-pocket cost to qualifying seniors 65 and older through EyeCare America, a public service program of the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, which matches patients to volunteer ophthalmologists.

“Sight problems should not be ignored at any age, but particularly in seniors, as problems are more common in this group of patients,” said Richard P. Mills, M.D., MPH, chairman for EyeCare America. “The earlier a patient seeks medical diagnosis and treatment, the greater the chances for saving and recovering one’s vision, which contributes to overall health and happiness.”

The program is sponsored by the Knights Templar Eye Foundation with additional support from Alcon. To learn more and to see if you qualify, visit www.eyecareamerica.org.