

Women's Health

Keeping An Eye On Vision Health

(NAPSA)—Doctors say maintaining vision health can be especially important for women. In fact, a new report from the National Women's Health Resource Center: *Women and Healthy Vision* shows that women are at higher risk than men of having vision problems—including blindness—as they age. Fortunately there are ways to keep your eyes healthy. Try these tips:

1. Quit smoking. If you smoke, you're much more likely to develop age-related macular degeneration, or AMD, than non-smokers. AMD is the most common cause of blindness in those over 65. While there are some ways to slow its progression, there is no cure.

2. Wear sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat when you're in the sun. These two simple steps can reduce your exposure to eye-damaging UV rays up to 18-fold. If you wear contacts, ask your eye care specialist about contact lenses with UV protection.

3. Watch your weight. Being overweight is a major risk factor for developing Type 2 diabetes. Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in those under 65. In addition, the Nurses' Health Study from Harvard Medical School found medically obese women were 36 percent more likely to develop cataracts.

4. Take fish oil supplements daily, or eat fish two or three times a week. There's some evidence that the omega-3 fatty acids found in fish and other foods may reduce your risk of AMD. Conversely, limit the amount of vegetable oil in your diet.

5. Eat three or more servings of fruit a day. In one study, women who did so reduced their AMD risk



There are a number of simple ways to protect your vision health.

by 36 percent compared to those who ate less than 1.5 servings.

6. Eat your spinach. What Pop-eye didn't know was that spinach is a rich source of lutein and zeaxanthin, powerful antioxidants that can reduce the risk of certain eye diseases, like AMD. Other good sources include any kind of leafy green vegetable such as collards and kale, as well as eggs and orange-colored fruits.

7. See your eye care professional for a full vision examination at least once every two years. Go more often if you have diabetes or any other eye-related condition.

8. Get a walk in every day. In one study, glaucoma patients who walked briskly four times per week for 40 minutes lowered the pressure within their eyes enough so they could stop taking their glaucoma medication.

9. Change your eye makeup every three to six months. It becomes contaminated with bacteria and can infect your eye.

10. Don't fall asleep in your daily wear contact lenses. In fact, don't ever wear them longer than they're designed to be worn.

For more information and a free copy of the *Women and Healthy Vision Report*, visit www.healthywomen.org or call 1-877-986-9472.