

# Give Back to Grandparents: Make Eye Health A Priority

(NAPSA)—Grandparents are special. They take us for ice cream and buy us our favorite treats. They also provide years of wisdom in just a few words. Because they are such an important part of our lives, give back to them each year with a gift that keeps on giving. The gift of sight.

Many people of all ages are not aware that eye diseases, such as macular degeneration, cataracts and glaucoma affect millions of aging adults, often without any warning signs. In order to catch these potentially blinding diseases early, many doctors recommend annual eye exams after age 50.

## Common Age-Related Eye Diseases

Macular degeneration, also known as age-related macular degeneration or AMD, is the leading cause of blindness for people over the age of 50. Macular degeneration causes loss of central vision—which affects normal everyday activities like recognizing faces, reading and driving a car—sometimes in as quickly as six months. Approximately 25-30 million people worldwide are affected by macular degeneration, but a national survey showed that more than two-thirds of Americans are not familiar with this disease.

Between two and three million Americans age 40 and over have glaucoma. Glaucoma is a disease usually associated with increased pressure in the eye. This pressure can cause damage to the retina. There is no “cure” for glaucoma, but vision loss can usually be prevented or slowed if treatment is started early.

Cataracts, which cause the clouding of all or part of the normally clear lens within the eye, account for one out of every seven cases of blindness in people age 45 and older. Cataracts form slowly and cause no pain. They can be easily treated surgically, but early



detection of the condition is imperative to prevent loss of vision.

## Test Your Eye Health Knowledge

Do your grandparents make an annual eye exam a part of their health care routine? If not, encourage them to take a field trip with you to the eye doctor at least once a year. In the meantime, can you and your grandparents answer these eye health questions?

1.) Age-related eye diseases such as macular degeneration, glaucoma and cataracts can be best detected through:

- a. Regular eye exams
- b. A fortune teller
- c. Looking in the mirror
- d. They cannot be diagnosed

2.) The age-related eye disease that causes loss of central vision, leaving only peripheral vision intact is:

- a. Glaucoma
- b. Cataracts
- c. Diabetic retinopathy
- d. Macular degeneration

3.) If you're 40-64 years old, how often should you visit the eye doctor?

- a. Every 6 months
- b. Every year
- c. Every 2 years
- d. Every day during lunch

For more information about macular degeneration or to receive a pledge card to remind your grandparents to get an eye exam annually, visit [www.amdfacts.com](http://www.amdfacts.com) or call 800-AMD-4636.