

Five Ways to Preserve Your Vision During National Save Your Vision Month

(NAPSA)—In the U.S., more than 900,000 adults over the age of 40 are legally blind. Many of these cases could have been prevented. To help raise awareness about vision health, March has been named National Save Your Vision Month.

Experts recommend five vision-saving tips to maintain your eyesight and your family's healthy vision by preventing the damaging effects of eye diseases such as glaucoma, cataracts and macular degeneration, also known as age-related macular degeneration or AMD:

1.) See Your Eye Doctor Regularly

Doctors encourage adults over 50 years of age to get an annual eye exam to test for eye diseases such as macular degeneration, glaucoma and cataracts. Macular degeneration is the least known of the three diseases, but is the leading cause of blindness for people over the age of 50. Macular degeneration is a retinal eye disease that causes loss of central vision, leaving only peripheral (or side vision) intact. Early detection is the key to preventing vision loss due to macular degeneration and other eye diseases.

2.) Wear Sunglasses

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, evidence has shown that repeated exposure to the sun's rays can contribute to the development of eye disorders that commonly occur as we age, such as cataracts and macular degeneration.

3.) Stop Smoking

Smoking has been clinically proven to increase the risk of macular degeneration. In fact, 20 to 30 percent of macular degenera-



tion cases are due to the prolonged effects of smoking.

4.) Wear Protective Eyewear During Recreation

Wearing protective eyewear will limit injuries to eyes, especially for children, subsequently reducing risks for complications later in life. Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat nearly 40,000 victims of sports-related eye injuries. For all age groups, sports-related eye injuries occur most frequently in baseball, basketball and racquet sports. Almost all sports-related eye injuries can be prevented.

5.) Take Your Vitamins

A recent study sponsored by the National Eye Institute (NEI) and published in the *Archives of Ophthalmology* 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. Make sure to consult your eye doctor to find out if vitamins can help you.

For more information about macular degeneration, please visit www.amdfacts.com or call 1-800-AMD-INFO.