

## A Woman's Guide to Vision Health



Many women know the importance of a regular doctor visit for themselves and their family. However, many of us don't realize that a regular visit to the eye doctor is just as necessary as a visit to the family doctor.

Regular eye doctor visits for women are important since women are more likely than men to suffer from eye problems, including the four leading causes of vision loss and blindness: cataracts, glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. <sup>1</sup>

There are also several overall health conditions that can affect vision in women:

**Diabetes** – One in 10 American women over the age of 20 has diabetes, which increases the risk for eye problems such as diabetic retinopathy and damage from ultraviolet (UV) light. <sup>2</sup>

**Autoimmune diseases** – Women are more prone to develop the following autoimmune diseases <sup>2</sup> that can cause blindness or serious eye problems:

- Lupus
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Sjögren's syndrome

**Breast cancer and other cancers** – Cancer treatments can potentially cause these eye conditions: <sup>2</sup>

- Bleeding in the eye
- Light sensitivity
- Cataracts
- Dry, itchy eyes

Women make up two-thirds of the more than 3.4 million Americans age 40 and older who are visually impaired. Early detection and treatment are the best ways to preserve vision. <sup>4</sup> As a woman, you take care of a lot. Be sure to take the time to take care of your eyes with annual eye exams—your eye health is too important to overlook.

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1. “Women in any stage of their lives need a complete eye examination to preserve their sight,” Prevent Blindness Ohio 2006.
2. “Women’s Eye Health: The Surprising Risks and Practical Solutions,” Transitions Optical Inc.
3. “Healthy Sight Working for You: Women,” Transitions Optical Inc., <http://www.healthysightworkingforyou.org/?category=4&page=employee>.
4. “Women in any stage of their lives need a complete eye examination to preserve their sight,” Prevent Blindness Ohio 2006.

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