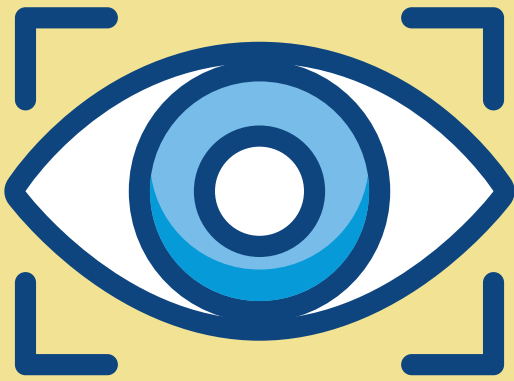


SAVE YOUR VISION

March Awareness Month



What is vision loss?

Vision loss is an impairment that cannot be restored with glasses, medication, or surgery. This is different than poor visual acuity and can be related to disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people who have impaired vision or complete loss of vision also suffer more often from other illness such as diabetes, arthritis, and mobility issues.¹ The CDC indicates that a lack of prevention efforts accounts for half of visual impairment and blindness, which can be prevented through early diagnosis and timely treatment. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, only 58.8% of adults aged 18 years and over had a dilated eye examination in a two year span.² In an effort to improve these statistics, HARC created this infographic on eye health.


Who suffers from vision loss?

8.9%

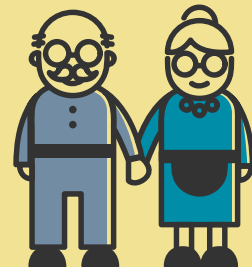
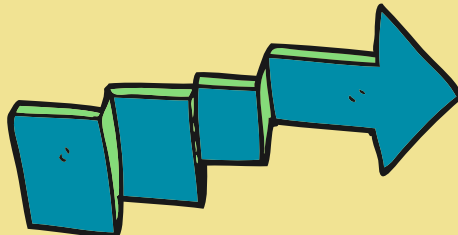
In the United States, 4.2 millions adults over age 40 suffered from vision impairments or blindness in 2012. About 6.8% of children under the age of 18 were diagnosed with an eye condition compromising their vision and almost 3% of children were diagnosed blind or visually impaired.³

In 2019, 8.9% of adults in the Coachella Valley were blind or had low vision in a population of approximately 30,152 residents.⁴

When should I get an eye exam?



As early as possible! Eye exams should begin as early as birth and consistently into later stages of life. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends eye exams are completed at least once in the following stages: birth, 6 to 12 months of age, 1 to 3 years old, and 3 to 5 years old. For adults up to age 65, a comprehensive eye exam should be completed every 5 years. After 65 years of age, a comprehensive eye exam should be completed every year.⁵ Persons who have diabetes or are high risk for eye disease should visit their doctor to address unique circumstances, eye exams may be required more often than the baseline recommendations.



What can I do to improve my eye health?

The CDC recommends the following tips to save your vision.⁶

Rest Your Eyes

20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes look away at objects 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This simple exercise will reduce eye strain and fatigue. Especially important if a lot of time is spent in front of a computer screen!



Have a Comprehensive Eye Exam

In a comprehensive eye exam, the eyes are dilated and more thoroughly screened for disease or problematic issues. This exam can catch illness before it develops into something worse!



Maintain Healthy Blood Sugar Levels

Persons with diabetes are at higher risk of losing eyesight if blood sugar levels are not properly regulated.



Wear Sunglasses

Sunglasses are multi-purpose: fashionable accessory and protective eyewear! Before making a purchase, make sure the sunglasses block UVA and UVB rays for the best protection.



Maintain a Healthy Diet

A diet that includes dark leafy greens, fruits, and vegetables high in vitamins, such as carrots, promote eye health. Omega 3 fatty acids have also been found to be beneficial to eye health.



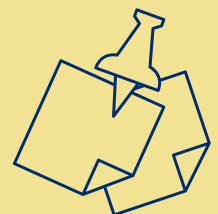
Wear Protective Eyewear

Not to be confused with sunglasses! This refers to eyewear, such as goggles or safety glasses, meant to be worn for dangerous jobs or activities that could cause physical damage to the eye.



These are a few of many tips to save you vision. See the CDC's website for additional tips!

<https://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/risk/tips.htm>



Resources in the Community

Braille Institute Coachella Valley

Braille Institute is a nonprofit organization with the mission to positively transform the lives of people with vision loss. With a location in Palm Desert, they offer a variety of free programs, classes, and services such as audio described movies, courses to make technology more accessible, and workshops to understand vision loss.

For more information about their services, visit:
<https://brailleinstitute.org/coachellavalley>



Coachella Valley Visually Impaired Community Services

Coachella Valley Visually Impaired Community Services is a nonprofit organization that offers a range of participative services and interactive activities to improve and enrich the lives and experiences of the visually impaired community in the Coachella Valley. Some of their classes and activities include peer support groups, descriptive movie sessions, and cognitive game exercises.

For more information about their services, visit: <https://www.cvvics.org>

For more resources, please visit: [HARCdata.org](https://harcdata.org)



Sources:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Vision Loss: A Public Health Problem. https://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/basic_information/vision_loss.htm
2. National Health Interview Survey. (2017). Increase the proportion of adults who have had a comprehensive eye exam in the last 2 years. <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/data-sources-and-methods/data-sources/national-health-interview-survey-nhis>
3. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Fast Facts of Common Eye Disorders. <https://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/basics/ced/fastfacts.htm>
4. Coachella Valley Community Health Survey. (2019). HARC. Available online at: <https://harcdata.org/coachella-valley-community-health-survey/executive-report/>
5. American Academy of Ophthalmology. (2021) Eye Screening for Children. <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/children-eye-screening>
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021) Tips to prevent vision loss. <https://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/risk/tips.htm>