

Spring 2019

Health Chronicle

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10 Warning Signs of Age-Related Eye Problems

Regular eye exams are the very best way to avoid vision problems, even as you grow older. If you haven't had an eye exam in over a year, schedule a visit with an eye doctor near you.

Being aware of certain warning signs also can help you take appropriate steps to maintain your eyesight, particularly if vision symptoms occur suddenly. In many cases, such as with a detached retina or rapid onset of glaucoma, prompt intervention is essential to avoid or minimize permanent vision loss.

While many eye problems can occur at any age, they often are more common in older individuals.

Unfortunately, aging also increases your risk for certain types of sight-threatening eye conditions that can lead to blindness.

10 Signs And Symptoms Of Eye Problems

The following signs and symptoms can indicate a medical emergency or an urgent condition that could cause significant vision loss over time. In most cases, you should see your eye doctor as soon as possible if you experience:



1. A flood of spots and floaters in your field of vision. Usually, eye floaters are due to a benign, age-related condition called vitreous detachment. This occurs when the eye's gel-like interior liquefies and separates from the retina, the light-sensitive inner lining of the back of the eye. But a sudden onset of spots and floaters also can be caused by a serious, sight-threatening tear or detachment of the retina. If you suddenly see a shower of spots and floaters, visit your optometrist or ophthalmologist immediately.
2. A sensation that a dark curtain has settled across your field of view. This could be caused by a retinal detachment, which occurs when the retina separates from the underlying layer of nourishing blood vessels (choroid). If the retina is not reattached within hours, vision loss can be permanent.
3. Sudden eye pain, redness, nausea and vomiting. These symptoms can signal a sudden (acute) attack of narrow-angle glaucoma, which can permanently damage the eye's optic nerve. Immediate treatment is required to prevent permanent vision loss.
4. Double vision, double images or "ghost" images. Double vision can be caused by many eye conditions. In some cases, double vision also can signal an underlying health emergency such as a stroke. If you have a sudden onset of double vision, see your eye doctor or family physician immediately.
5. Sudden blurry vision in one eye. If you are over 60, your chance of developing a macular hole in the part of the retina where fine focusing occurs increases. Because macular holes can worsen and cause permanent loss of vision, it's important to visit your eye care practitioner for a diagnosis and prompt treatment (if necessary). A simulation of peripheral vision loss, also known as tunnel vision.
6. A narrowing of your field of view. A reduction of your ability to see objects off to the sides could be a sign of glaucoma. Without intervention, peripheral vision loss could continue to worsen, leading to tunnel vision or even blindness.
7. A gradual loss of central vision, including distortions such as straight lines appearing wavy. These symptoms may be caused by macular degeneration (AMD), a leading cause of blindness among older Americans. In the past, there was no effective treatment for macular degeneration. But today, new medical treatments sometimes can halt or limit AMD-related vision loss.
8. Cloudy and blurred eyesight, "halos" around lights at night, loss of bright color vision. These vision changes may be due to cataracts. Cataracts tend to worsen gradually over time and are not a medical emergency. Nevertheless, as your eye's natural lens continues to cloud with aging, your vision will continue to deteriorate unless you have cataract surgery that replaces your cloudy lens with a custom intraocular lens (IOL). If you wait too long for cataract surgery, you increase your chance of complications such as glaucoma. Also, if cataract surgery is postponed too long, the cloudy lens can harden and become more difficult to remove.
9. Blind spots in your field of view, accompanied by eye floaters and unexplained blurred vision. If you have diabetes, these vision problems may be due to the onset of diabetic retinopathy. Regular eye exams are essential for diabetics, particularly if you are over age 60. By evaluating the condition of your retina, your eye doctor can provide valuable information to your general physician about the control and severity of your diabetes.
10. "Scratchy" or irritated sensation, eye surface pain, tearing. These signs and symptoms are most commonly due to dry eye syndrome. Dry eyes usually are more of a nuisance than a sight-threatening condition. But symptoms can be severe, particularly as you grow older and your body produces fewer tears or your tear chemistry changes. Consult your eye care practitioner for advice about remedies, which may include over-the-counter or prescription eye drops.

Preventing Age-Related Eye Problems

Of course it's far preferable to prevent age-related eye problems than to try to minimize their impact on your vision after they have begun.

You can reduce your risk of developing serious eye problems later in life by maintaining a healthy lifestyle and having routine eye exams. Eye vitamins and good nutrition also may reduce your risk of certain eye problems.

<https://www.allaboutvision.com>



Blurry vision, ghost images and nighttime halos around lights all can be warning signs of eye problems.



STUDENT LOAN RELIEF BENEFIT

The Board of Directors is proud to offer StuLo as a new benefit to all Healthy Vision Association members.

44 million Americans are saddled with an average of \$37,000 of student loan debt and 29.5 million are under the age of 39.

StuLo offers a wholistic approach that focuses on student loan debt relief for members of the Healthy Vision Association.



Federal Student Loan Concierge

Concierge Level Service

- Accredited Student Loan Specialists
- Expertise in federal loan types and repayment program qualification
- Consultative approach for determination of consolidation and repayment qualification
- Full service, end-to-end, and streamlined document preparation and processing on behalf of the member
- Cuts 90+ day processing time down to 6-8 weeks

Benefits

- Free initial consultation for personal review of loans and finances to determine program eligibility on the first call
- Creditworthiness is not a factor in federal consolidation and repayment programs
- Average monthly payments reduced by over \$300 last year
- Member decides whether or not to make loan payments during 6-8 week consolidation application process
- One-time service fee paid in installments

Private Student Loan Refinancing

State of the Art Technology and Service

- Access to a platform of over 300 non-profit, local, and community banks
- Broad range of underwriting risk tolerance for income, credit, and debt ratios
- Quick and easy 3 minute online application to determine interest rate qualification
- High level of customer satisfaction

Benefits

- Variety of loan types to meet employee objective of lower payments or accelerated payoff
- Monthly payment reductions of up to 40% with average savings of \$15,270
- Fixed, variable, and interest-only repayment options available for up to first four years of loan
- Largest unemployment protection in the industry with up to 18 months
- Access to private student loans for members or dependent still in college
- No cost to member. No loan origination fees or prepayment penalties

To register visit www.mystulo.com or call 888-543-6627. Group code: HealthyVision

Recommended Ingredients In Vision Supplements



As research continues on the benefits of vision supplements in reducing the risk of eye problems (and perhaps in improving visual acuity in healthy eyes), it seems wise to supplement your diet with a daily eye supplement that contains many, if not all, of the following ingredients.

Most of these vitamins and nutrients may play a key role in reducing inflammation and oxidative changes associated with the development of degenerative diseases, including chronic and age-related eye problems:

- **Vitamin A and beta-carotene.** Vitamin A (and its precursor, beta-carotene) is necessary for night vision, wound healing and proper functioning of the immune system. Though supplemental beta-carotene has been associated with greater risk of certain cancers among smokers and previous smokers, obtaining a healthy amount of beta-carotene from natural food sources does not appear to elevate this risk.
- **Vitamin B complex** (including vitamins B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B12 folic acid, biotin and choline). B complex vitamins may help reduce chronic inflammation and prevent elevated homocysteine levels in the blood, which have been associated with vascular problems affecting the retina. B vitamins also may play a role in

reducing the risk of macular degeneration and in the treatment of uveitis, a common cause of blindness.

- **Vitamin C.** Some studies have found vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant, is associated with reduced risk of cataracts.
- **Vitamin D.** Recent literature suggests vitamin D deficiency is widespread, especially during winter months in cold climates. Research suggests vitamin D is associated with a lower risk of macular degeneration.
- **Vitamin E.** Another component of AREDS and AREDS2 supplements, vitamin E has been associated with reduced risk of cataracts in other studies.
- **Lutein and zeaxanthin.** These carotenoids and macular pigments may reduce the risk of macular degeneration and cataracts.
- **Phytochemical antioxidants.** Plant extracts, such as those from ginkgo biloba and bilberry, contain phytochemicals, which appear to provide protection from oxidative stress in the entire body, including the eyes.
- **Omega-3 essential fatty acids.** These essential nutrients may reduce the risk of dry eyes and may have other eye health benefits as well.
- **Bioflavonoids.** Found in many fruits and vegetables, bioflavonoids appear to help the body absorb vitamin C for higher antioxidant efficiency.

Tips For Buying Vision Supplements

Generally, you will save money when choosing vision supplements if you purchase a multivitamin, rather than buying each vitamin and nutrient separately. Popular eye multivitamins include:

- ICaps (Alcon)
- PreserVision AREDS 2 Formula + Multivitamin (Bausch + Lomb)
- Oculair (Biosyntrx)
- Macular Health Formula (EyeScience)

There are many other brands as well. When choosing eye supplements, make sure you read their labels carefully and follow these guidelines:

1. Check for an expiration date to make sure the supplement you are purchasing is fresh. Make sure the seal on the bottle has not been broken.
2. Check the serving size. Do you need to take only one tablet, or do you need to take two or more each day to get the percentages of the Daily Value of each ingredient listed?
“Daily Value” or “DV” is a basis for labeling nutrient content that the FDA began to require of food processors and manufacturers in the 1990s. It is not necessarily a recommended intake, since it is based on general measurements of the population at large, and different people require different amounts of nutrients.
3. Capsules often are absorbed better than hard tablets and may cause less stomach upset.
4. The best eye supplements contain quality ingredients that have high bioavailability, meaning your body can absorb them easily. For example, the natural form of vitamin E (D-alpha-tocopherol) is roughly twice as active in the human body as the artificial form (DL-alpha-tocopherol).

5. Avoid eye supplements that contain dairy products, corn or wheat as fillers, especially if you have allergies or other intolerance problems. The most reputable companies typically will formulate their supplements without unnecessary fillers.

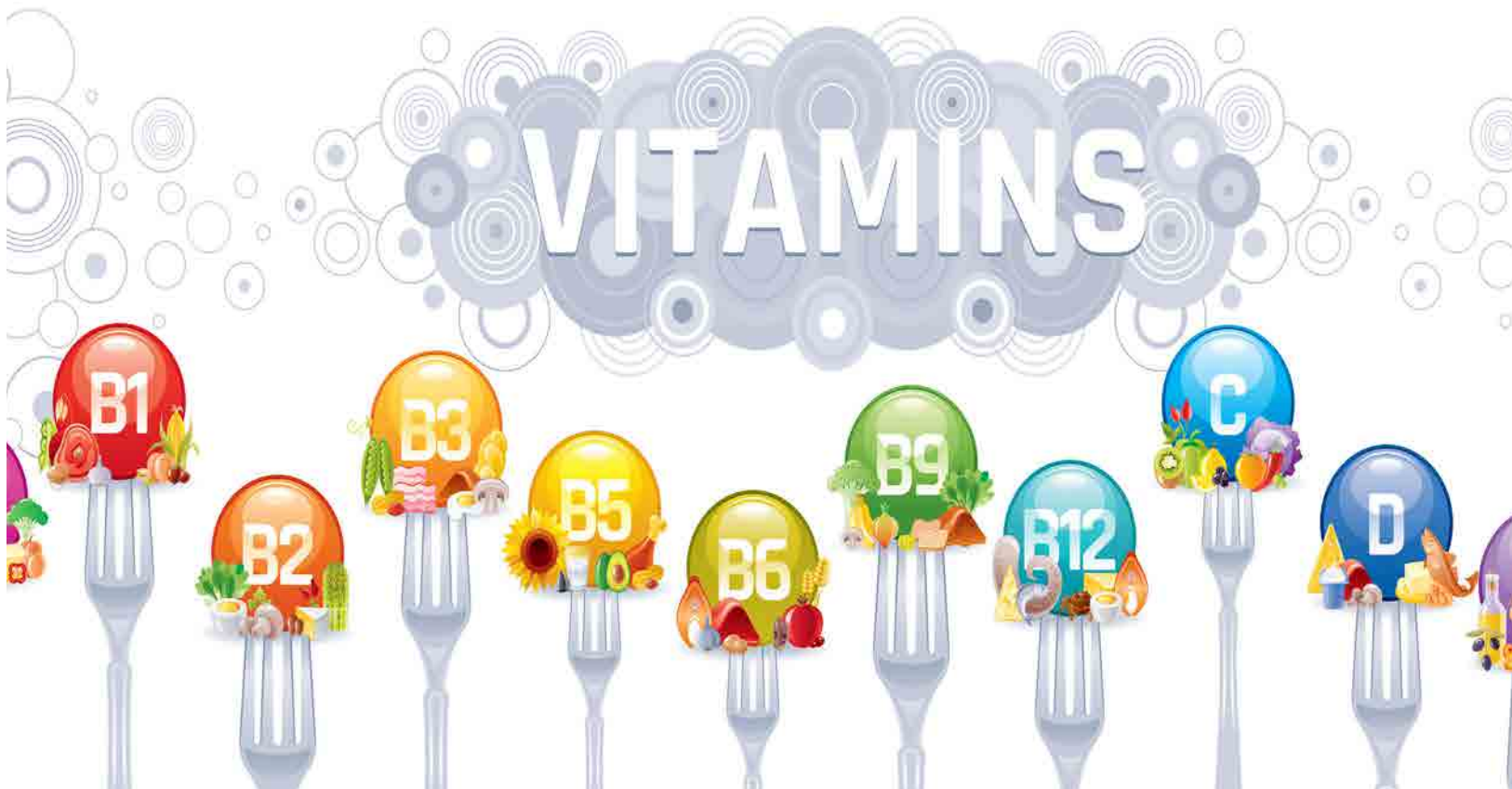
To make sure you are getting a reputable brand, choose one of the popular eye supplements listed above or consult your eye doctor. Nutritionists and knowledgeable nutrition store clerks are also good sources of information.

Precautions When Taking Eye Supplements

While dietary supplements, including eye supplements, generally are safe and beneficial, you should follow a few precautions. If you are pregnant or nursing or are taking blood thinners (anti-coagulants), speak to your doctor before using any type of nutritional supplements.

Even though vision supplements are a non-prescription item, do not exceed the dosage instructions on the bottle, to reduce the risk of toxicity or drug reactions.

<https://www.allaboutvision.com>



Keeping a Healthy Body Weight

Maintaining your ideal body weight is tough, no matter where you are in your weight loss journey. Use these tips to set yourself up for success.

This means higher risk for many serious health problems, including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes.

If you're overweight, losing even a few pounds can improve your health, so every step in the right direction counts!

When your weight is in a healthy range:

- Your body more efficiently circulates blood.
- Your fluid levels are more easily managed.
- You are less likely to develop diabetes, heart disease, certain cancers, gallstones, osteoarthritis, breathing problems and sleep apnea.
- You may feel better about yourself and have more energy to make other positive health changes.

Losing weight isn't easy, but there's no doubt it's worth it. It sounds simple enough: To lose weight, you need to burn more calories than you eat. And to stay at a healthy weight, you need to balance healthy eating and physical activity. Most fad diets and quick weight loss schemes don't work, because they don't help you learn how to maintain a healthy weight over the long haul.

There's no "secret" to success, but there are a few basic steps to losing weight you can take.

Keeping the Weight Off

OK, you've lost some weight. Now you can relax, right? Not so fast! Maintaining weight loss can take just as much effort as losing it. Here are some tips:

- **Know your triggers**, roadblocks and favorite excuses. We all have them!
- **Don't kid yourself.** This is a long-term effort. The first year or two after significant weight loss may be the hardest, but if you can stick it out you're more likely to make it in the long run.
- **Learn from others** who've succeeded and follow their example.



- **Make sure you have a social support network** of friends, family and health professionals who will support your new healthy habits.
- **Find healthy ways to motivate** yourself to stick with it.
- **At the end of the day**, it's up to you. Hold yourself accountable for the decisions you make.
- **And remember**, you can't do it by diet alone. For people trying to keep weight off, exercise is even more essential. The American Heart Association recommends 200 to 300 minutes of physical activity a week to keep those extra pounds from creeping back.

Lapsing and Relapsing

A lapse is a small mistake or slip into old habits. This can happen when you have a bad day and overeat or skip your workout. A relapse is when you go back to old habits for several days or weeks.

Remember that having a lapse or relapse is not failing. You can get back on track. Try to find new, healthier ways to handle life's stresses besides overeating or becoming one with your couch. Take a walk, talk with a friend, or do something to help someone else. Just don't give up!

Article reprinted from www.heart.org

Creating Healthy Habits Make Better Choices Easier



We know that making healthy choices can help us feel better and live longer. Maybe you've already tried to eat better, get more exercise or sleep, quit smoking, or reduce stress. It's not easy. But research shows how you can boost your ability to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle.

"It's frustrating to experience setbacks when you're trying to make healthy changes and reach a goal," says NIH behavior change expert Dr. Susan Czajkowski. "The good news is that decades of research show that change is possible, and there are proven strategies you can use to set yourself up for success."

Lots of things you do impact your health and quality of life, now and in the future. You can reduce your risk for the most common, costly, and preventable health problems—such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, type 2 diabetes, and obesity—by making healthy choices.

Know Your Habits

Regular things you do—from brushing your teeth to having a few drinks every night—can become habits. Repetitive behaviors that make you feel good can affect your brain in ways that create habits that may be hard to change. Habits often become automatic—they happen without much thought.

"The first step to changing your behavior is to create an awareness around what you do regularly," explains Dr. Lisa Marsch, an expert in behavior change at Dartmouth College. "Look for patterns in your behavior and what triggers the unhealthy habits you want to change."

Maybe you eat too much while watching TV or join a friend on smoke breaks even when you don't want a cigarette. "You can develop ways to disrupt those patterns and create new ones," Marsch says. For instance, eat meals with the TV off or join friends for healthy activities, like walk breaks.

Make a Plan

Make a plan that includes small, reasonable goals and specific actions you'll take to move toward them.

"If you walk by the vending machine at work and buy junk food every afternoon, try walking a different way to eliminate that decision and bring healthy snacks from home," Czajkowski says. "Whenever possible, make the healthy choice the easy choice."

Consider what you think you'll need to be successful. How can you change things around you to support your goals? You might need to stock up on healthy foods, remove temptations, or find a special spot to relax.

Get friends and loved ones involved. Research shows that people's health behaviors tend to mirror those of their family and friends. Invite them to join you, support you, and help you stay on track.

It's also important to plan for obstacles. Think about what might derail your best efforts to live healthier. How can you still make healthy choices during unexpected situations, in stressful times, or when tempted by old habits?

Stay on Track

Doing positive things for yourself can feel exciting and rewarding. But there will also be times when you wonder if you can stick with it.

"Identify negative thoughts and turn them into realistic, productive ones," Marsch advises.

Keeping a record can help. You can use a paper journal, computer program, or mobile app to note things like your diet, exercise, stress levels, or sleep patterns. A study of people who lost at least 30 pounds and kept the weight off for at least a year found that they often tracked their progress closely.

"Even when you think you're about to 'fall off the wagon,' hold on," Czajkowski says. "Continue to track your behavior. Sometimes when you feel like you're failing, you can learn the most."

Marsch and others are working on digital technologies, like mobile apps, that could support you in a moment of weakness. Her team is also using technology to learn more about how to measure and increase the ability to monitor and control our behavior.

"The more you practice self-control, the better you become at it," says Dr. Leonard Epstein, who studies behavior change and decision-making at the University at Buffalo. "You develop the capacity to act and react another way."

Think About the Future

Epstein has found that some people have a harder time than others resisting their impulses. He calls this "delay discounting,"

where you discount, or undervalue, the larger benefits of waiting in favor of smaller immediate rewards. This can lead to things like overeating, substance abuse, drinking or shopping too much, or risky sexual behavior.

"You can learn to postpone immediate gratification through episodic future thinking, or vividly imagining future positive experiences or rewards," he explains. "It's a great way to strengthen your ability to make decisions that are better for you in the long run."

Epstein is now studying how to use this technique to help people who are at risk for type 2 diabetes prevent the disease.

Focusing on how a change might heal your body and enhance your life can help. When you stop smoking, your risk of a heart attack drops within 24 hours. Reducing stress can lead to better relationships. Even small improvements in your nutrition and physical activity can reduce your health risks and lengthen your life.

Be Patient

Sometimes when you're trying to adopt healthier habits, other health issues can get in the way.

"When you're really struggling with these behaviors, ask yourself if more is going on," Czajkowski says. "For example, mental health conditions like depression and anxiety can be tied to unhealthy behaviors."

A health professional can work with you to address any underlying issues to make change feel easier and to help you be more successful.

You're never too out of shape, too overweight, or too old to make healthy changes. Try different strategies until you find what works best for you.

"Things may not go as planned,

and that's okay," Czajkowski says. "Change is a process. What's most important is to keep moving forward."

Reprinted from www.newsinhealth.nih.gov

Build Healthy Habits

- Plan. Identify unhealthy patterns and triggers. Set realistic goals. Write down steps to help you achieve them.
- Change your surroundings. Find ways to make healthier choices easy choices. Remove temptations. Work for changes in your community, like safe places to walk.
- Ask for support. Find friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, or groups for support or ask people to join you.
- Fill your time with healthy activities. Try exercise, a favorite hobby, or spending time with family and friends.
- Track your progress. Record how things are going to help you stay focused and catch slip-ups.
- Imagine the future. Think about future benefits to stay on track.
- Reward yourself. Give yourself a healthy reward when you've achieved a small goal or milestone, like a massage or personal time.
- Be patient. Improvement takes time, and setbacks happen. Focus on progress, not perfection.

HVA SUPPORTS HEALTHY VISION AROUND THE WORLD

Every year, Healthy Vision Association sponsors a variety of charitable organizations. Here is a list of the organizations we currently, and are continuing to, sponsor.

- **Prevent Blindness** – <http://www.preventblindness.org>
- **Optometry Giving Sight** – <http://www.givingsight.org>
- **America's VetDogs** – <http://www.vetdogs.org>
- **Himalayan Cataract Project** – <http://www.cureblindness.org>
- **The Seeing Eye** – <http://www.seeingeye.org>
- **United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA)** – <http://www.usaba.org>
- **Eye Care Charity of Mid-America (ECCOMA)** – <http://www.eccoma.org>
- **Macula Vision Research Foundation** – <http://www.mvrf.org>
- **Children's Center for the Visually Impaired (CCVI)** – <http://www.ccvi.org>
- **Guiding Eyes for the Blind** – <http://www.guidingeyes.org>
- **Team Activities for Special Kids (TASK)** – <http://www.tasksports.org>
- **Mercy Ships** – <http://www.mercyships.org>
- **Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments** – <http://www.dgckids.org>
- **1Touch Project** – <http://www.1touchproject.com>
- **ARCHS FBO Kids Vision for Life** – <http://www.kidsvisionforlifestlouis.com>
- **Unite for Sight** – <http://www.uniteforsight.org>
- **Folsom Project for the Visually Impaired**
- **MUOT Tiger OT Low Vision Program**
- **NY Metro Blind Hockey Team** - www.nymbh.org
- **St. Louis Blues Blind Hockey Club** - www.stlbbhc.com
- **United in Stride** - www.unitedinstride.com
- **Thompson Center for Autism - University of Missouri Autism and Visual Impairment Outreach** - <https://thompsoncenter.missouri.edu>

HVA is very fortunate to have an extremely impressive board of directors. Their real world success and experience and their overall commitment and care have been pivotal to the growth and success of HVA. Please feel free to visit the membership site for more information on the individuals that make up the board of the Healthy Vision Association.

HVA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The Healthy Vision Association is proud to recognize the scholarship recipients from these Optometry schools:

- Chicago College of Optometry
- Indiana University School of Optometry
- Inter American University of PR School of Optometry
- Kentucky College of Optometry
- MCPHS University
- New England College of Optometry
- Nova Southeastern University
- Pacific University College Of Optometry
- SALUS University
- Southern College of Optometry
- SUNY College of Optometry
- The Ohio State University College of Optometry
- University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry
- University of California Berkeley School of Optometry
- University of Houston College of Optometry
- University of Missouri Saint Louis College of Optometry
- Western University of Health Science
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Catherine Ong

Colin Scott Hunsaker

Alexis Clay

Quan Dao

Renee Desmond Houser

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Joshpal Singh Gill

Pearl Motkoski

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The HVA Health Chronicle is published by:
Healthy Vision Association

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