

Spring 2020

Health Chronicle

Staying Safe During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

(Red Cross) - The American Red Cross is closely monitoring the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and following the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

We know this is a stressful time and people want to know what they can do right now to protect themselves and their families. That's why the Red Cross is highlighting some everyday steps that people in the U.S. can take now. In addition, stay informed about what's happening in your local community and always follow the directions of state and local authorities.

LIMIT THE SPREAD OF GERMS AND PREVENT INFECTION

The Red Cross recommends the following steps to help prevent the spread of germs during this situation:

- Stay home if you can and avoid gatherings of more than ten people.
- Practice social distancing by keeping a distance of about six feet from others if you must go out in public.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with

unwashed hands.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing; throw used tissues in the trash. If a tissue isn't available, cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve, not your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, computers, phones, keyboards, sinks, toilets, faucets and countertops.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them - use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. Full information on how to disinfect found here.
- Wear a facemask if you are sick. You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office.

According to the CDC, COVID-19 symptoms include fever, shortness of breath and a cough. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Call your doctor for medical advice if you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop symptoms.



WHO IS AT A HIGHER RISK?

According to the CDC, early information shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this virus. This includes older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes and lung disease.

If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or a serious medical condition, it is extra important for you to take actions to avoid getting sick.

Stay home as much as you can and avoid crowds as much as possible. Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others.

- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- Stock up on supplies.
 - Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications to have on hand in case there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community and you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.
 - If you cannot get extra medications, consider using a mail-order option.
 - Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.
 - Have enough household items and groceries on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for a period of time.

The Best Way to Wash Your Hands

(US News) - While washing your hands isn't complicated, there is an optimal technique, says Dr. Frank Esper, pediatric diseases specialist at Cleveland Clinic Children's.

To maximize the benefit you get from washing your hands, Esper suggests following these steps:

1. Wet your hands thoroughly. Water is the mainstay of cleaning your hands with soap. "It is able to remove all the large particles off the skin as well as allow the incoming soap to spread easily and effectively across the whole surface, Esper says.
2. Apply soap and lather your hands. Some people believe you need to use an "antibacterial" soap to get your hands truly clean, but that's a misconception, Esper says. "There (are) certain soaps that are called 'antibacterial' soaps, or soap with antibacterial compounds added, but really, all soaps are antibacterial," he explains. "You don't need soap with antibacterial or antibiotic labels; just a regular, good, old generic soap will do just as fine as the expensive ones." Liquid soap is slightly better than bar soap because it's not reused by multiple people, he says.
3. Scrub your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds. It's important to give the soap time to work. "It's not an instantaneous kill," Esper says. "It takes 20 seconds or so to really break open the virus particles or bacterial cell walls. Don't be too quick to rinse to where you are washing away the soap before it has finished the job."
4. Rinse your hands well. Rinsing your hands thoroughly helps remove remnants of dead bacteria and viruses off your skin.
5. Turn off the faucet with a towel or a paper towel. If the sink has a faucet you used to turn on the water, touching it placed bacteria or viruses on its surface. "You don't want to recontaminate your hands after washing," Esper says.
6. Dry your hands thoroughly. Use a clean towel, a fresh paper towel or an air dry device to dry your hands.

Your Aging Eyes: How You See As Time Goes By



(NIH - News in Health) - You may barely notice the changes at first. Maybe you've found yourself reaching more often for your glasses to see up close. You might have trouble adjusting to glaring lights or reading when the light is dim. You may even have put on blue socks thinking they were black. These are some of the normal changes to your eyes and vision as you age.

As more Americans head toward retirement and beyond, scientists expect the number of people with age-related eye problems to rise dramatically. You can't prevent all age-related changes to your eyes. But you can take steps to protect your vision and reduce your risk for serious eye disease in the future. Effective treatments are now available for many disorders that may lead to blindness or visual impairment. You can also learn how to make the most of the vision you have.

"Vision impairment and blindness are among the top five causes of disability in older adults," says Dr. Cynthia Owsley, an eye researcher at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Vision changes can make it difficult to perform everyday activities, such as reading the mail, shopping, cooking, walking safely, and driving. "Losing your vision may not be life-threatening, but it certainly affects your quality of life," Owsley says.

The clear, curved lens at the front of your eye may be one of the first parts of your body to show signs of age. The lens bends to focus light and form images on the retina at the back of your eye. This flexibility lets you see at different distances—up close or far away. But the lens hardens with

age. The change may begin as early as your 20s, but it can come so gradually it may take decades to notice.

Eventually, age-related stiffening and clouding of the lens affects just about everyone. You may have trouble focusing on up-close objects, a condition called presbyopia. Anyone over age 35 is at risk for presbyopia.

"You might find you're holding your book farther away to read it. You might even start thinking your arms just aren't long enough," says Dr. Emily Chew, a clinical researcher at NIH's National Eye Institute. "A good and simple treatment for presbyopia is reading glasses."

Cloudy areas in the lens, called cataracts, are another common eye problem that comes with age. More than 24 million Americans have cataracts. By age 75, more than half of us will have had them.

Some cataracts stay small and have little effect on eyesight, but others become large and interfere with vision. Symptoms include blurriness, difficulty seeing well at night, lights that seem too bright and faded color vision. There are no specific steps to prevent cataracts, but tobacco use and exposure to sunlight raise your risk of developing them. Cataract surgery is a safe and common treatment that can restore good vision.

The passage of time can also weaken the tiny muscles that control your eye's pupil size. The pupil becomes smaller and less responsive to changes in light. That's why people in their 60s need three times more light for comfortable reading than those in their 20s. Smaller pupils make it more difficult to see at night.

Trouble seeing at night can affect many daily activities, including your ability to drive safely. Loss of peripheral vision increases your risk for automobile accidents, so you need to be more cautious when driving.

"Keeping older adults active and on the road as drivers, as long as they're safely able to do so, is considered important to their health and psychological well-being," says Owsley. But she notes that tests for motor vehicle licenses tend to focus on visual acuity—how well you can read the letters on an eye chart.

"Visual acuity tests may not be the best way to identify drivers at risk for crashes," she says. "Other issues are also important, like contrast sensitivity, your peripheral vision and your visual processing speed—how quickly you can

process visual information and make decisions behind the wheel.”

Owsley and her colleagues measured car crashes among a group of 2,000 drivers, 70 years old and older, over a period of three years. They found that a reduced field of vision and slowed processing speed both increased collision risk. Their research is helping to identify screening tests that can better predict safe or dangerous driving.

If you're not convinced you should have regular eye exams, consider that some of the more serious age-related eye diseases—like glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and diabetic eye disease—may have no warning signs or symptoms in their early stages.

Glaucoma comes from damage to the optic nerve. “Glaucoma can slowly steal your peripheral vision. You may not notice it until it's advanced,” says Chew. It can be treated with prescription eye drops, lasers, or surgery. If not treated, however, it can lead to vision loss and blindness.

AMD causes gradual loss of vision in the center of your eyesight. “AMD is the leading cause of blindness in Americans over age 65,” says Chew.

A large NIH-supported clinical study by Chew and others found that a

specific combination of vitamins and minerals can prevent AMD from progressing to a more severe form. Scientists also found that people who eat diets rich in green, leafy vegetables—such as kale and spinach—or fish are less likely to have advanced AMD. A large study of 4,000 AMD patients failed to show a benefit from fish oil supplements. However, vitamin/mineral supplements—especially those containing lutein and zeaxanthin, which are found in green leafy vegetables—slows progression to vision-threatening late AMD.

Diabetic eye disease, another leading cause of blindness, can damage the tiny blood vessels inside the retina. Keeping your blood sugar under control can help prevent or slow the problem.

The only way to detect these serious eye diseases before they cause vision loss or blindness is through a comprehensive dilated eye exam. Your eye care professional will put drops in your eyes to enlarge, or dilate, the pupils and then look for signs of disease. “Having regular comprehensive eye care gives your doctor a chance to identify a problem very early on and then treat it,” says Owsley. Annual eye exams are especially important if you have diabetes.

Protect Your Vision

- *Have a comprehensive eye exam each year after age 50.*
- *Stop smoking.*
- *Eat a diet rich in green, leafy vegetables and fish.*
- *Exercise.*
- *Maintain normal blood pressure.*
- *Control diabetes if you have it.*
- *Wear sunglasses and a brimmed hat any time you're outside in bright sunshine.*
- *Wear protective eyewear when playing sports or doing work around the house that may cause eye injury.*

“Many of the healthy behaviors that help reduce your risk for long-term diseases, like heart disease and cancer, can also help to protect your eyesight,” says Owsley. These include not smoking, eating a healthy diet, and controlling conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. “It's nice to know that healthy living not only adds years to your life, but also protects your vision as you get older,” Owsley says.

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MAS Benefits

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- **Peripheral Artery Disease** to screen for plaque buildup in the arms and legs.
- **Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm** ultrasound to screen for an enlargement in the abdominal aorta, the largest blood vessel in the body.

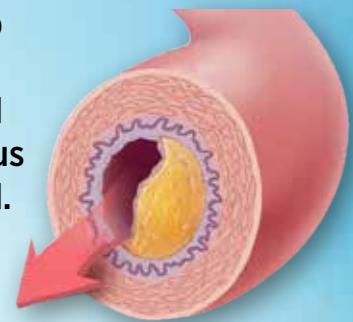
¹ American Heart Association

Plaque buildup can lead to heart disease, stroke and aneurysms.

A normal artery allows blood to flow through easily.



Plaque buildup reduces your blood flow and can be dangerous if left untreated.



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5 Things You Should Know About Diabetic Eye Disease



Did you know that diabetes can cause eye disease? If left untreated, it can cause vision loss or even blindness. To help you keep your vision healthy, here are five things the National Eye Institute (NEI) would like you to know about diabetic eye disease:

1 A group of eye problems—

People with diabetes may face several eye problems as a complication of this disease. They include cataract, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy, which is the leading cause of blindness in American adults age 20–74.

2 No symptoms, no pain—

In its early stages, diabetic retinopathy has no symptoms. A person may not notice vision changes until the disease advances. Blurred vision may occur when the macula swells from the leaking fluid (called macular edema). If new vessels have grown on the surface of the retina, they can bleed into the eye, blocking vision.

3

Have diabetes? You are at risk—

Anyone with diabetes is at risk of getting diabetic retinopathy. The longer someone has diabetes, the more likely he or she will get this eye disease. In fact, between 40 and 45 percent of those with diagnosed diabetes have some degree of diabetic retinopathy.

4

Stay on TRACK—

That is: Take your medications as prescribed by your doctor; Reach and maintain a healthy weight; Add more physical activity to your daily routine; Control your ABC's—A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels; and Kick the smoking habit.

5

Get a dilated eye exam—

If you have diabetes, be sure to have a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year. Diabetic eye disease can be detected early and treated before noticeable vision loss occurs.

To learn more, visit <http://www.nei.nih.gov/diabetes>.

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

Prevent Blindness works to make sure that everyone has a chance to enjoy a lifetime of healthy vision, starting in infancy and continuing through adulthood. We partner with other socially-minded organizations to help raise awareness on issues such as access to eye exams and glasses, school readiness, sports eye safety, home eye injury prevention and fireworks safety.

Prevent Blindness affiliates provide direct programs in communities around the country to make sure that children have their eyes checked and are ready for school. They conduct preschool vision screening programs. They train and certify vision screeners. They promote, develop and partner in state coalitions to improve health systems for children's vision. They help children in low income families pay for professional eye care and glasses.

<https://www.preventblindness.org>

Optometry Giving Sight

Our vision is to see a world where avoidable blindness and vision loss due simply to the lack of a pair of eye glasses no longer threaten the quality-of-life and future livelihood of children and adults because there is universal access to quality vision and eye care services for all those in need. Our global fundraising initiative specifically targets the prevention of blindness and impaired vision due to uncorrected refractive error – the need for an eye exam and a pair of glasses.

<https://givingsight.org>

America's Vet Dogs

The service dog programs of America's VetDogs® were created to provide enhanced mobility and renewed independence to United States veterans, active-duty service members, and first responders with disabilities, allowing them to once again live with pride and self-reliance. Not only does a service dog provide support with daily activities, it provides the motivation to tackle every day challenges.

VetDogs trains and places service dogs for those with physical disabilities; guide dogs for individuals who are blind or have low vision; service dogs to help mitigate the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder; and facility dogs as part of the rehabilitation process in military and VA hospitals.

<https://www.vetdogs.org>

United in Stride

United in Stride was founded in 2015 by the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI) as a tool to unite runners who are blind or visually impaired with sighted guides across North America. We believe that a robust, interactive sighted guide database will create more opportunities for the next generation of visually impaired runners.

Together, we can make sure that blind and visually impaired runners always have access to a training guide when needed. And they will know that running outdoors is no longer an obstacle, allowing them to continue to push themselves as hard as any sighted runner, and prove that "disability" does not mean "inability"!

<https://www.unitedinstride.com>

Kids Vision for Life St. Louis

Launched in 2008 by Essilor Vision Foundation, Kids Vision for Life's mission is to eliminate poor vision and its lifelong consequences.

In 2009, Kids Vision for Life St. Louis began serving the St. Louis region with its sponsors: Crown Vision Center, Area Resources for Community and Human Services (ARCHS), the University of Missouri-St. Louis College of Optometry, and the Essilor Vision Foundation.

Kids Vision for Life provides vision screenings, eye exams and new eyeglasses to students in need at no cost to the family through mobile clinics, school systems, central locations and special events. Vision screenings, eye exams, and prescription eyewear are provided to elementary and middle school students that are economically disadvantaged and would not otherwise be able to obtain them.

<https://www.kidsvisionforlifestlouis.com>

Children's Center for the Visually Impaired

The mission of the Children's Center for the Visually Impaired is to prepare children with visual impairments, including those with multiple disabilities, to reach their highest potential in the sighted world.

Our doors are open for any infant to Kindergarten-age child whose visual impairment is significant enough to adversely affect his or her educational performance. Children and their parents come here to discover a truly unique, positive environment with innovative and stimulating programs customized for each student.

<https://ccvi.org>

United States Association of Blind Athletes

USABA provides life-enriching sports opportunities for every individual with a visual impairment. A member of the U.S. Olympic Committee and U.S. Soccer, USABA provides athletic opportunities in various sports including, but not limited to track and field, Nordic and alpine skiing, biathlon, judo, wrestling, swimming, tandem cycling, powerlifting and goalball (a team sport for the blind and visually impaired).

The second part of USABA's mission is to change society's negative stereotypes concerning the abilities of blind people as well as other disabled individuals. Combating stereotypes is achieved by both educating the public through various media avenues as well as by training athletes to enter schools and community organizations to directly address disability issues.

<https://www.usaba.org>

Unite for Sight

Unite For Sight supports eye clinics worldwide by investing human and financial resources in their social ventures to eliminate patient barriers to eye care. Unite For Sight applies best practices in eye care, public health, volunteerism, and social entrepreneurship to achieve our goal of high-quality eye care for all.

Outreach services are brought to the people in their villages, in some cases including villages seven or more hours from the clinics. These patients are provided with regular follow-up care by our outreach teams throughout the year. To date, we have provided eye care services to more than 2.9 million people worldwide, including more than 109,000 sight-restoring surgeries..

<http://www.uniteforsight.org>

Guiding Eyes for the Blind

Guiding Eyes for the Blind is dedicated to creating and supporting life-changing connections between people and dogs.

We provide superbly bred and trained dogs to people who are blind and visually impaired. Our dogs are known for their exceptional temperaments and success at helping people gain independence and to expand their horizons of opportunity.

At our facilities in Yorktown Heights, NY, and Patterson, NY, we breed, raise, and train exceptional dogs. Then we connect them to people who are seeking increased freedom and independence, so that together, they can experience all kinds of life adventures.

<https://guidingeyes.org>

Team Activities for Special Kids (TASK)

Team Activities for Special Kids (TASK) is a year-round instructional sports program that provides athletic and social opportunities to kids with special needs. The purpose of the program is to help build self-esteem and skills in children with special needs.

TASK began in the summer of 1996 with a tee ball program involving 26 athletes with special physical and/or mental needs. Since then we've evolved into a year-round sports program and currently offer a variety of sports to over 1,918 participants yearly.

<https://taskstl.org>

St. Louis Blues Blind Hockey Club

Our mission is to provide blind or visually impaired youths and adults the opportunity to participate fully in the sport of Blind Hockey.

We focus on the successful development of skating and hockey skills while emphasizing sportsmanship, teamwork, competition, and an overall love for the game.

The St. Louis Blues Blind Hockey Club strive to create an active hockey community for both recreational and competitive players with skills and ability to participate in games regionally and nationally with the other U.S. and Canadian Blind Hockey organizations.

<https://www.stlbbhc.org>

Mercy Ships

Globally, 5 billion people lack access to safe surgery. Children, teens, and adults suffer and die every day from treatable causes, and one child in eight will die before age 5.

Mercy Ships deploys hospital ships to combat this overwhelming statistic. Our ships are state-of-the-art facilities that offer clean water, reliable electricity, and care centers. Because over 50% of the world's population lives within 100 miles of the coast, we're able to sail a modern hospital ship with a crew of 400 volunteers directly to people who lack access to safe, affordable medical care.

<https://mercyships.org>

Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments

In 1951, a group of Delta Gamma alumni from Washington University started a local organization to serve the needs of young children with visual impairments and blindness. The founders of the Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments set forth on a mission to provide educational services for children in the earliest years, prior to the start of school, with an emphasis on guidance and training for their parents.

Services offered include comprehensive early intervention services to address the needs of infants and toddlers who are blind or visually impaired and their families. Services include education, orientation and mobility services, occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy services for children with complex developmental challenges. The Center has recently introduced Low Vision Evaluations to further assist the early intervention team.

<https://dgckids.org>

Eye Thrive

“Eye Thrive removes the barriers of access and expense that stand between too many poor children and a bright future.”

We are dedicated to helping children and parents learn about the importance of eye health and the impact uncorrected vision can have on a person’s life.

<https://eccoma.org>

NY Metro Blind Hockey Team

Our goal is to introduce people of all ages and skill levels to ice skating and to the sport of ice hockey, and to create a community of connected people by building up our visually impaired team for the New York Metro area. USA Hockey is working aggressively with Canadian Blind Hockey to make this an official Paralympic sport. Working together, we believe we can get accomplish these goals.

Players will have many opportunities to travel across the USA and Canada with the hope to eventually travel worldwide.

<https://www.nymbh.org>

Support Sight

Support Sight is dedicated to finding a cure for macular degeneration and other retinal diseases along with support services.

All charitable donations will fund macula vision research projects led by the best and most promising scientists at the University of Pennsylvania – a world leader in eye research.

<https://mvrf.org>

The Seeing Eye

The Seeing Eye’s mission is to enhance the independence, dignity and self-confidence of people who are blind, through the use of specially trained Seeing Eye® dogs.

In pursuit of this mission, The Seeing Eye breeds and raises puppies to become Seeing Eye dogs, trains Seeing Eye dogs to guide blind people, instructs blind people in the proper use, handling, and care of the dogs and conducts and supports research on canine health and development.

<https://seeingeye.org>

1Touch Project

The 1Touch™ Project is the first comprehensive descriptive self-defense program designed specifically for people who are blind. The program is a hands-on self-defense technique for dealing with assaults, aggressive behavior, and bullying. 1Touch explores participant's hidden assumptions regarding their own disability -- their personal perception of their blindness and insecurities built upon that perception. The 1Touch Project is primarily a method of personal development.

1Touch™ addresses the physical and psychological causes of insecurity and vulnerability through the empowering practice of hands-on, active, self-defense methods, self-defense theory, and discussions examining what makes one insecure and why.

<http://www.1touchproject.com>

Folsom Project for the Visually Impaired

The Folsom Project for the Visually Impaired utilizes the talents of a few specially trained inmates at Folsom Prison in California to assist them in their mission to serve the needs of people who are blind or visually impaired. Inmates are trained to recycle eyeglasses, translate books and music into Braille, caption videos, and record audio books.

This program helps students who are visually impaired receive quality education while helping inmates develop skills that are in high demand.

MUOT Tiger OT Low Vision Program

In response to the state-wide shortage of teachers trained to work with Visually Impaired students, Missouri State University has developed a Blindness and Low Vision Certification Program (BLV) which allows both currently certified teachers and candidates with a bachelor's degree but no certification to earn their initial certificate in Blindness and Low Vision (Birth - Grade 12). This program has received full accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Himalayan Cataract Project

The Himalayan Cataract Project was co-founded by doctors Sanduk Ruit and Geoff Tabin. Its roots are based at the Tilganga Eye Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal, the first outpatient cataract surgery facility in the Himalayan region.

Recognizing that cataracts are treatable and cause 70% of unnecessary blindness in Nepal galvanized HCP's founders, doctors Ruit and Tabin, to take action.

<https://www.cureblindness.org/>

Thompson Center for Autism - University of Missouri Autism and Visual Impairment Outreach

The mission of the Thompson Center is to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by autism spectrum disorder and neurodevelopmental disorders through world class programs that integrate research, clinical service delivery, education and public policy.

Our aim is to support families from the point of initial contact through access to needed services in the community, with routine follow-up care over time to ensure the best possible outcome for each child and family.

<https://thompsoncenter.missouri.edu>



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and association services, call or write:

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Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative,
enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained
herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to
change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice,
diagnosis or treatment.

Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Benefits may not be available in all membership levels.
For more information, or to upgrade your membership, please call
1-800-387-9027.

The Healthy Vision Association is dedicated to helping its members see well and be healthy by providing access that might not be available through employers to products, services and information that promote vision and overall health.

As a Healthy Vision Association member, you'll enjoy discounts and savings on health, travel and other services that can save you hundreds of dollars each year. And, you'll have the opportunity to enroll in premium vision plans offered by VSP® Vision Care to Association members (plans offered may vary by state). A portion of your annual enrollment fees will be used to sponsor charitable organizations that support vision and overall health and wellness.

