

# Women, children, and eye health



## Why regular eye exams and sun protection are important

Slight changes in eyesight over time can make it hard to notice when eye conditions develop. This is especially true for women, who have a much higher risk of vision changes and loss than men. Pregnancy can cause certain conditions that impact the eyes. Living longer also puts women at a higher risk than men for age-related eye diseases.<sup>1</sup>

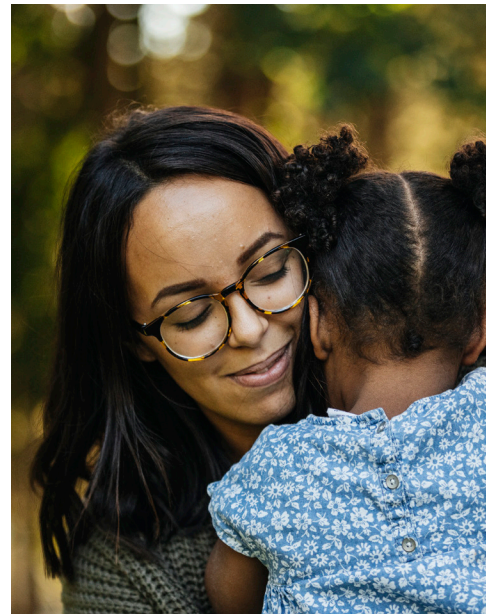
With early detection, eye doctors can treat many conditions to help reduce vision loss. That is why it is vital to have routine vision checks and protect your eyes from ultraviolet (UV) rays.

### Pregnancy-related eye conditions

- Diabetes and high blood pressure can develop during pregnancy. Eye doctors often find these conditions during an eye exam before an OB-GYN would test for them.
- Hormonal changes can cause dry eyes or blurred vision. Eyesight often returns to normal shortly after giving birth. If you're having a baby, an eye doctor can help you keep your eyes healthy during your pregnancy.<sup>2</sup>

### Aging and UV damage

- Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) occurs when cells in the back of the eye start to deteriorate as people get older. AMD can lead to blurred vision, blind spots, and loss of sight.<sup>3</sup>
- Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in American adults. People who have diabetes often develop this condition. That's because high blood sugar levels can harm blood vessels in the retina, which lines the back of the eye.
- Cataracts are cloudy areas on your eyes that blur vision and make things less colorful. They are common in older people and can often be removed by surgery.
- Dry eye disease occurs when your eyes don't make enough tears. It can cause itching, burning, and a gritty feeling in the eyes. Talk to your eye doctor about over-the-counter or prescription eye drops.



**67%**

**of all people who have vision problems are women.<sup>1</sup>**



## Do you need to find an eye doctor?

Use the Find Care feature on our Sydney<sup>SM</sup> Health app or **anthem.com** to find an eye care professional in your plan's network.

# Keep your child's eye health in sight

Eyesight can have a surprising impact on a child's health and well-being. Children who have trouble with their eyes may not feel well and may not do as well in school.

Common vision problems in children, such as eye focus and alignment can be missed during the eye tests given in schools. These conditions can cause symptoms of eye strain, such as headaches, low energy, and poor attention.<sup>4</sup>

## How to protect your child's eyes

### Sports injuries

Forty-three percent of sports-related eye injuries happen to children ages 14 and younger. Ninety percent of these injuries could be avoided with proper safety.<sup>5</sup>

Protective eyewear, such as safety glasses and shields, goggles, and eye guards, add an extra layer of defense. If your child wears glasses, they can wear prescription sports frames and impact-resistant lenses over their everyday glasses or contacts. Lenses made from polycarbonate are up to 10 times more impact-resistant than plastic or glass lenses.<sup>6</sup>

**TIP:** If your child prefers both regular and sport glasses, use your glasses benefit for the regular pair then get prescription sports glasses as a second pair at a 40% discount.

### Sunlight

Children tend to spend more time outdoors than adults, so they have greater exposure to the sun's harmful UV rays. Long-term UV exposure can lead to eye diseases.

To protect kids' eyes from the sun:

- Have them wear sunglasses that block 100% of UV rays, even on cloudy days.
- Choose Transitions® lenses for prescription glasses. These lenses are clear indoors but turn as dark as sunglasses outdoors, based on the strength of UV rays. Covered dependents under age 19 can get them at no additional cost.

### Phone, computer, and TV screens

Setting limits on your child's screen time not only helps their physical and mental health, but it also can protect them from eye strain and myopia. Myopia, or nearsightedness, is becoming more common as children spend more time looking at electronics and digital devices.

A person who is nearsighted can see close objects well but cannot clearly see far objects without glasses or contacts. Finding and treating myopia early can help slow its progress before a child becomes an adult.

Routine eye exams, protective eyewear, and screen-time limits can help keep eyes healthy and protect sight over time.



## Do carrots really help your eyes?

**Yes!** Eating fruits and vegetables can help keep eyes healthy and lower the risk of eye disease.

- Orange-colored fruits and veggies have vitamin A, which helps the eyes stay moist. Choose carrots, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, and apricots.
- Citrus fruits, red bell peppers, and tomatoes are rich in vitamin C, which can help prevent or delay age-related vision problems.
- Leafy greens, like kale, romaine, spinach, and broccoli, contain antioxidants that support the macula. This is the part of the eye that helps us see things in detail.

<sup>1</sup> All About Vision: *Women's vision: Understanding risks and ways to protect it* (March 15, 2022): [allaboutvision.com](https://allaboutvision.com).

<sup>2</sup> WebMD: *Pregnancy and Vision* (April 30, 2022): [webmd.com/eye-health](https://webmd.com/eye-health).

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Common Eye Disorders and Diseases* (August 23, 2023): [cdc.gov/visionhealth](https://cdc.gov/visionhealth).

<sup>4</sup> Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: *Vision's Connection to Learning Problems: Keep an Eye Out for These Signs* (Sep 27, 2022): [chop.edu](https://chop.edu).

<sup>5</sup> All About Vision: *Your Child's Sight: Protect Your Child from Eye Injuries* (June 22, 2022): [allaboutvision.com](https://allaboutvision.com).

<sup>6</sup> All About Vision: *Polycarbonate lenses: advantages and disadvantages* (October 18, 2023): [allaboutvision.com](https://allaboutvision.com).

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