



Normal Changes in the Aging Eye

Presbyopia/Focusing Problems

As the lens in our eye ages, it loses its flexibility to focus on objects up close. Often after the age of 40 we will need reading glasses to help focus up close for reading or doing any kind of near work that requires seeing detail.

Cataracts / Decrease in Color and Contrast Sensitivity and Increase in Glare

As the lens ages, it loses its transparency and becomes opaque or yellow in color. This is called a cataract. It can cause blurry, indistinct vision making it harder to distinguish color, see detail and can cause glare. In the early stages of cataracts, eyeglasses can help to improve vision, but once a cataract is more advanced it will require surgery. Luckily, cataract surgery has evolved to be a very safe and relatively quick procedure.

Dry Eyes / Eye Irritation

Tear production decreases as we age, especially in women after menopause, which can cause dry eye leading to discomfort, irritation, tearing and even intermittent blurriness. Artificial tears, purchased over the counter can be helpful in relieving discomfort, but if the eyes become overly dry and irritated, consult your eye care professional.

Vitreous Floaters / Flying Dots and Lines in Your Vision

As we age, the fluid in our eyes begins to shrink and starts to form strings or clumps, which can look somewhat like "cobwebs". Seeing floaters is a normal part of aging however sometimes it is a sign of a retinal detachment which can lead to blindness. If you see new floaters and/or flashes of light, please see your eye care provider as soon as possible, especially if you are over the age of 45, are nearsighted or have had eye injuries in the past.



Tips on How to Protect Your Eyes and Keep Them Healthy

- » See your eye care provider regularly and notify them immediately if you experience any sudden changes in your eyes.
- » Protect your eyes from the sun by wearing sunglasses and a hat or visor when outside.
- » Do not smoke or expose yourself to secondhand smoke.
- » Exercise regularly.
- » Maintain healthy blood pressure and sugar levels.
- » Eat a healthy well-balanced diet filled with fruits and vegetables.
- » Reduce eye strain by taking frequent breaks when doing any kind of near work, especially on the computer. Remember the 20/20/20 rule; every 20 minutes look 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds to relax your focusing system.

**For more information on living with vision loss, contact
Lighthouse Low Vision Services at: (206) 436-2154
OR
bit.ly/LighthouseLVS**