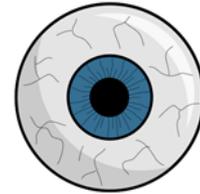


Health & Wellbeing

May – Eye health



Did you know?

In 2009, almost 575,000 Australians over 40 had vision loss representing 5.8% of the population in that age group. This number is predicted to rise to almost 801,000 by 2020 unless people are proactive about saving their sight.



Causes of vision loss in Australia

80% of blindness and vision impairment is caused by five main conditions:

- Age-related Macular Degeneration: Age-related macular degeneration is a disease associated with ageing that affects the central vision.
- Cataract: A cataract is a clouding of the lens inside the eye which may result in poor vision.
- Diabetic retinopathy: Diabetic retinopathy is an eye disease caused by diabetes, including Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. It affects the small blood vessels of the retina at the back of the eye.
- Glaucoma: Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that slowly damage the nerve for vision at the back of the eye.
- Uncorrected and under corrected refractive error: Refractive error is a common eye disorder that occurs when the eye cannot clearly focus on the images of objects looked at.

What's the good news?

The good news is that almost 75% of vision loss is preventable or treatable. Saving sight could be as easy as having regular eye tests. Eye tests can be arranged through a general practitioner, optometrist or by referral to an ophthalmologist. Remember regular eye tests will help detect any problems at an early stage and allow for the best treatment.

Protect the eyes

- When in the sun by wearing sunglasses and a hat to prevent ultraviolet damage.
- When performing Do-It-Yourself activities by wearing eye protection goggles or glasses.
- When playing sport, especially squash, by wearing appropriate protective sports glasses.
- Stop smoking.



Ensure you are not adding to the statistics

If a change in vision is noticed, arrange an eye examination without delay. It is important that you have regular eye tests if:

- There is a family history of eye disease
- You have diabetes
- You are over the age of 40 years
- You are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

To be a leader in the development of a vibrant, healthier community