

## WHAT IS LOW VISION?



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Low Vision is a term you are hearing used more and more. Low vision simply means that even with regular glasses, contact lenses, medicine or surgery, people find everyday tasks like reading the mail, shopping, cooking, watching TV and writing, difficult to do. Irreversible vision loss is most common among people over age 65; however losing vision is not just a part of getting older. Most people develop low vision because of an eye disease or health condition. The most common causes are macular degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma and diabetes.

### ***Are there symptoms for low vision?***

You should be aware of the signs that can signal vision loss. What are they? Listed below are some items, that even with your regular glasses, you may find difficulty doing.

- Recognizing faces of friends and relatives
- Reading, cooking, sewing, picking out or matching up clothing
- Doing things in the home because lights seem dimmer than usual
- Reading street or bus signs or names of stores

These are early warning signs, and should be heeded. The earlier your vision concern is diagnosed the better your chances of successful treatment to preserve your remaining vision. This is one reason a regular dilated eye exam should be part of your routine health care. Your optometrist can tell the difference between normal changes in the aging eye and those brought on by eye diseases.

### ***What is the treatment for low vision?***

If you are diagnosed with low vision, there are rehabilitation programs, devices and technology available that can help you do many of the tasks you did before. There are also agencies and groups within our communities that provide assistance and information on low vision to people, families and caregivers. For more information on Low Vision, or community programs that aid people with Low Vision, contact your eye health provider.

