



FOCUSING ON RETINAL HEALTH

How do your eyes convert reflected light into the images that you see? The process begins at the retina, a thin layer of tissue at the back of the eye. Here millions of photoreceptor cells translate the focused light, which has passed through the cornea and lens into full-color visual information. From there, the data heads to the brain, where it's combined to form a unified and right-side-up image that's then instantly interpreted and defined. When your eyes are healthy, this intricate process operates seamlessly.

Good Eyesight Depends Upon Maintaining Retinal Health

According to statistics, millions of people across the globe suffer from low vision or blindness due to retinal diseases and conditions. What causes retinal damage can vary. Typically trauma, an illness, or the physiological changes associated with the aging process are to blame. However, in addition to the risks associated with getting older, having a family history of retinal disease, smoking, UV exposure, a diagnosis of high myopia, and medical conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure also increases your chances of developing retinal issues.

While the list of conditions affecting the retina is a long one, some of the most common ones include the following:

- **Floaters:** Shadows cast onto the retina appear as floating specks in your vision. Floaters may be the result of age-related changes to the jelly-like substance in the eye, or a consequence of a torn retina.
 - **Diabetic Retinopathy:** Persistent high blood sugar has a damaging effect on retinal blood vessels causing leak blood and fluid that lead to vision loss.
 - **Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD):** A progressive loss of central vision due to the deterioration of the small central portion of the retina.
 - **Retinal Detachment:** Occurs when the retina lifts away from the underlying tissue due to the presence of fluid from a retinal tear.
 - **Retinitis Pigmentosa:** A Hereditary eye disease that is characterized by the gradual degeneration of the retina.
-

It's Essential To Be Aware & Take Care

When it comes to your eye health and vision, it's essential to be vigilant. Some of the warning signs and symptoms of retinal conditions to look out for include the appearance of floaters or cobwebs, blurry central vision, seeing straight lines that look wavy, trouble with peripheral vision, or central vision loss.

To help protect yourself against the vision loss associated with retinal problems, see your optometrist for comprehensive eye exams as recommended. Also, pay attention to any changes in your vision and to seek prompt care when and if any develop. Early diagnosis and treatment can help stop vision loss.

