

PREVENT BLINDNESS: CATARACT AWARENESS

Globally Cataracts Are the Leading Cause of Blindness

Cataract Awareness Month is intended to shed light and educate the public on the most common eye disease. This guide is intended to help educate your patients on what cataracts are, facts, risk factors, symptoms and preventive measures they can take to decrease their risk.

01 | What are Cataracts?

Cataracts are cloudy areas in the lens of the eye that can cause changes in vision. They may affect one or both eyes. For those who have cataracts, seeing through cloudy lenses is similar to looking through a frosty or fogged-up window. Cataracts more commonly occur due to aging, but may also occur due to trauma, radiation exposure or eye surgery for another problem.

02 | Facts

- 24.4 Million American's older than age 40 have cataracts
- By age 80, more than half of all Americans have cataracts
- Cataracts are slightly more common in women than in men

03 | Risk Factors

- Increasing age
- Diabetes
- Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol
- Excessive exposure to sunlight
- Exposure to ionizing radiation, such as that used in X-rays and cancer radiation therapy
- Family history of cataracts
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Previous eye injury or inflammation
- Previous eye surgery
- Prolonged use of corticosteroid medications
- Smoking

04 | Signs & Symptoms

- Clouded, blurred or dim vision
- Increased difficulty with vision at night

- Sensitivity to light and glare
- Seeing "halos" around lights
- Frequent changes in eyeglass or contact lens prescription
- Fading or yellowing of colors
- Double vision in a single eye

05 | Decrease Your Risk

- Have regular eye exams
- Quit smoking
- Reduce alcohol use
- Wear sunglasses
- Manage other health problems
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Choose a healthy diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables

For additional resources on cataracts and eye health visit: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cataracts/basics/definition/con-20015113>

Did You Know? A cataract cannot spread from one eye to the other

References

<http://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/cataracts.htm>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cataracts/basics/symptoms/con-20015113>