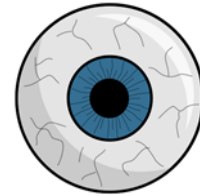


# Health & Wellbeing

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