

## Vision

*“Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am in distress.” Psalm 31:9 NIV*

More than one million Americans at or over age 40 are currently blind. Vision impairment creates problems for an additional 2.4 million. As Baby Boomers age, these numbers are expected to double. That means this is a problem for all of us. Blindness and visual impairment from many eye diseases and disorders can be reduced when detected and treated early. The leading causes of vision blindness and visual impairment include:

**Diabetic Retinopathy:** This common complication of diabetes affects and impairs vision in nearly half of all diabetics to some degree over their lifetime. Blood vessels of the retina can break down, become blocked or leak. Effective treatment includes laser surgery and some medications. Diabetics require annual dilated eye exams.

**Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD):** AMD is the most common cause of legal blindness and vision impairment in older Americans because it damages central vision. There is no generally accepted treatment, but laser therapies may reduce the risk of further vision loss.

**Cataract:** This is the clouding of the lens of the eye and usually appears with advancing age but can be linked to smoking, diabetes and excessive exposure to sunlight.

Surgical treatment can eliminate vision loss by replacing the eye's lens.

**Glaucoma:** Vision loss is caused by gradual damage to the optic nerve which carries visual information from the eye to the brain. Vision loss is not noticed until significant nerve damage has occurred so screenings are important for early diagnosis when it can be controlled. Any vision loss cannot be restored.

We have a responsibility to care for our eyesight. God has given us our body and the resources to care for it. In I Corinthians 3:16 Paul tells us, “You yourselves are God’s temple and ...God’s spirit lives in you.” In verse 9 he says, “You are God’s field, God’s building.” By seeing our eye doctor regularly for vision exams and following our doctor’s advice, we become good stewards of our bodies. We use the resources God has given us so we can become the extraordinary servants He intends us to be.

*(Source: American Foundation for the Blind [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org))*

### *References / Resources:*

[www.aoa.org/](http://www.aoa.org/) - American Optometric Association – information for professionals and families on specific disease processes, vision problems, and healthy practices for all ages

[www.cclvi.org](http://www.cclvi.org) – Council of Citizens with Low Vision International – has resources, links, and quarterly audio/large-print newsletter for the vision impaired

[www.lighthouse.org](http://www.lighthouse.org) – Lighthouse International – provides clinical services, education, research, and advocacy to preserve vision and assist people with low vision

[www.navh.org/](http://www.navh.org/) - National Association for Visually Handicapped – health information for specific eye disorders, services for low vision, and a catalog of visual aids

[www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov) – National Eye Institute/National Institute of Health – consumer information, resources, and research on eye health

