

A Newsletter  
for Members of the

NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
SENIOR AMERICANS

2013

# AGE OF WISDOM

## Your Aging Eyes: How You See as Time Goes By

You may barely notice the changes at first. Maybe you've found yourself reaching more often for your glasses to see up close. You might have trouble adjusting to glaring lights or reading when the light is dim. You may even have put on blue socks thinking they were black. These are some of the normal changes to your eyes and vision as you age.

As more Americans head toward retirement and beyond, scientists expect the number of people with age-related eye problems to rise dramatically. You can't prevent all age-related changes to your eyes. But you can take steps to protect your vision and reduce your risk for serious eye disease in

the future. Effective treatments are now available for many disorders that may lead to blindness or visual impairment.

"Vision impairment and blindness are among the top 5 causes of disability in older adults," says Dr. Cynthia Owsley, an eye researcher at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Vision changes can make it difficult to perform everyday activities, such as reading the mail, shopping, cooking, walking safely and driving. "Losing your vision may not be life-threatening, but it certainly affects your quality of life," Owsley says.

The clear, curved lens at the front of your eye may be one of the first parts of your body to show signs of age. The lens bends to focus light and form images on the retina at the back of your eye. This flexibility lets you see at different distances—up close or far away. But the lens



hardens with age. The change may begin as early as your 20s, but it can come so gradually it may take decades to notice.

Eventually, age-related stiffening and clouding of the lens affects just about everyone. You'll have trouble focusing on up-close objects, a condition called presbyopia. Anyone over age 35 is at risk for presbyopia.

"You might find you're holding your book farther away to read it. You might even start thinking your arms just aren't long enough," says Dr. Emily Chew, a clinical researcher at NIH's National Eye Institute. "A good and simple treatment for presbyopia is reading glasses."

Cloudy areas in the lens, called cataracts, are another common eye problem that comes with age. More than 22 million Americans have cataracts. By age 80, more than half  
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## Your Aging Eyes

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of us will have had them. Some cataracts stay small and have little effect on eyesight, but others become large and interfere with vision. Symptoms include blurriness, difficulty seeing well at night, lights that seem too bright and faded color vision. There are no specific steps to prevent cataracts, but tobacco use and exposure to sunlight raise your risk of developing them. Cataract surgery is a safe and common treatment that can restore good vision.

The passage of time can also weaken the tiny muscles that control your eye's pupil size. The pupil becomes smaller and less responsive to changes in light. That's why people in their 60s need 3 times more light for comfortable reading than those in their 20s. Smaller pupils make it more difficult to see at night.

Trouble seeing at night, coupled with a normal loss of peripheral vision as you age, can affect many daily activities, including your ability to drive safely. Loss of peripheral vision increases your risk for automobile accidents, so you need to be more cautious when driving.

"Keeping older adults active and on the road as drivers, as long as they're safely able to do so, is considered important to their health and psychological well-being," says Owsley. But she notes that tests for motor vehicle licenses tend to focus on visual acuity—how well you can read the letters on an eye chart.

"Visual acuity tests may not be the best way to identify drivers at risk for crashes," she says. "Other issues are also important, like contrast sensitivity, your peripheral vision and your visual processing speed—how quickly you can process visual information and make decisions."

To find better ways to assess driver safety, Owsley and her colleagues are giving 2,000 older drivers different types of vision screening tests, including tests of visual processing speed. By tracking their driving records for several years, the scientists can figure out which tests were best at predicting safe or dangerous driving, including car crashes. These findings might eventually lead to more accurate screening tests to identify potentially unsafe drivers.



If you're not convinced you should have regular eye exams, consider that some of the more serious age-related eye diseases—like glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and diabetic eye disease—may have no warning signs or symptoms in their early stages.

Glaucoma comes from increased fluid pressure inside the eye that damages the optic nerve. "Glaucoma can slowly steal your peripheral vision. You may not notice it until it's advanced," says Chew. It can be treated with prescription eye drops, lasers or surgery. If not treated, however, it can lead to vision loss and blindness.

AMD causes gradual loss of vision in the center of your eyesight. "AMD is the leading cause of blindness in Americans over age 65," says Chew.

A large NIH-supported clinical study by Chew and others found that a

specific combination of vitamins and minerals can prevent AMD from progressing to a more severe form. Scientists also found that people who eat diets rich in green, leafy vegetables—such as kale and spinach—or fish are less likely to have advanced AMD. A larger study of 4,000 AMD patients is now testing to see if fish oil or a vitamin/mineral combination might slow progress of the disease.

Diabetic eye disease, another leading cause of blindness, can damage the tiny blood vessels inside the retina. Keeping your blood sugar under control can help prevent or slow the problem.

The only way to detect these serious eye diseases before they cause vision loss or blindness is through a comprehensive dilated eye exam. Your eye care professional will put drops in your eyes to enlarge, or dilate, the pupils and then look for signs of disease. "Having regular comprehensive eye care gives your doctor a chance to identify a problem very early on and then treat it," says Owsley. Annual eye exams are especially important if you have diabetes.

"Many of the healthy behaviors that help reduce your risk for long-term diseases, like heart disease and cancer, can also help to protect your eyesight," says Owsley. These include not smoking, eating a healthy diet and controlling conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. "It's nice to know that healthy living not only adds years to your life, but also protects your vision as you get older," Owsley says.

*This article is from NIH News in Health, a monthly newsletter from the National Institutes of Health, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For more information, go to <http://newsinhealth.nih.gov>.*

# NOTICE of ANNUAL MEETING of MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of the National Association of Senior Americans will be held at 16476 Wild Horse Creek Road, Chesterfield, Missouri, on Monday, May 20, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting of any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

## PROXY

**National Association of Senior Americans  
May 20, 2013 Annual Meeting of Members  
THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SENIOR AMERICANS**

The undersigned member of the National Association of Senior Americans does hereby constitute and appoint the President of the National Association of Senior Americans, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of the National Association of Senior Americans and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

- (1) FOR (    ), or to (    ) WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors: Tom McMahon, Tom Ebner, and Karen Boeker.
- (2) In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy when properly executed will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Please date and sign and return promptly to 16476 Wild Horse Creek Road, Chesterfield, Missouri 63017 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

Chesterfield, Missouri

April 15, 2013  
Date



## Many seniors suffer from sleep problems

Not sleeping well can lead to problems, especially for older adults, research has found. Depression, attention and memory problems, excessive daytime sleepiness and nighttime falls can all occur as a result of poor nighttime sleeping. According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, some of the more common sleep disorders in older adults include:

- Insomnia, which affects almost half of adults 60 and older.
- Obstructive sleep apnea, which can elevate the risk for high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease and cognitive problems. Snoring, a symptom of OSA, is a very common condition affecting nearly 40 percent of adults, and is more common in older people.
- Restless legs syndrome, which can cause people to jerk and kick their legs every 20 to 40 seconds during sleep, is evident in almost 40 percent of older adults.

Follow these tips to get a better night's sleep:

- Establish a routine sleep schedule.
- Avoid using the bed for anything other than sleep and intimacy.
- Avoid substances that disturb your sleep, like alcohol or caffeine.
- Avoid daytime naps. If you must take a nap, limit the time to less than one hour and no later than 3 p.m.
- Stick to rituals that help you relax each night before going to bed. This can include things like a warm bath, a light snack or a few minutes of reading.
- Don't take your worries to bed. Bedtime is a time to relax, not to hash out the stresses of the day.
- If you can't fall asleep, leave your bedroom and engage in a quiet activity. Return to bed only when you are tired.
- Keep your bedroom dark, quiet and a little on the cool side.



## Add a little salt? Sure, just don't overdo it

Salt has been used as a food preservative and flavor enhancer for thousands of years.

The ancient Egyptians, for example, left salted fish and birds as funeral offerings as far back as 3,000 B.C. The word "salary" comes from the Latin word "salarium," which referred to wages paid to Roman soldiers to purchase salt.

Today, of course, salt is everywhere, and that has doctors worried. The average American consumes about 3,400 mg of salt each day, far more than the American Heart Association's suggested 1,500 mg (about a teaspoon's worth).

The problem? Salt in the bloodstream tends to attract water; too much salt increases blood volume; and that creates pressure on blood vessels and the heart.

The long-term effects of excessive salt consumption have been linked to heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, kidney disease, and other illnesses.

Talk with your doctor about how much salt in your diet is good for your health.

By the way, don't substitute sea salt for regular table salt in hopes of eating healthier; scientists say that both have equal chemical makeup and nutritional value.

### Heavy subject: To avoid back injuries, lift with care

You can injure yourself by lifting even a light load if you're not careful about what you're doing. Whether you're at home or at work, remember these tips for staying safe every time you have to pick up a box, no matter how large or small:

- Check before lifting. If you're not sure how heavy a box is, try moving it a little first. Nudge it with your foot, or give it a slight, gentle push. This will give you a better idea of how heavy it is and how much effort you'll need to put into lifting it.
- Wear the right shoes. Footwear with nonskid soles will help you avoid slipping and sliding as you walk with your load.
- Lift correctly. Don't bend at your waist. Keep your back straight as you lower your body, then lift straight up with your legs.
- Watch your step. Know where you're going before you lift. Remove any potential obstacles that might make you trip, and don't rush with a heavy load. The additional weight can throw your balance off.



### Microwaving often preserves nutrition

You're busy and every minute counts. That means you have to take advantage of time savers, but many people feel like they are cutting corners or taking the easy way out if they prepare food in their microwaves.

Rest easy, meal preparers. The truth is that there are actually nutritional advantages to preparing many foods in the microwave, according to Yale-New Haven Hospital's Nutrition Advisor, which is compiled by registered dietitians and dietetic interns at the hospital, which serves as Yale University School of Medicine's main teaching center ([www.ynhh.org](http://www.ynhh.org)).

The microwave not only saves time, but because it requires shorter cooking times, covered cooking and little to no water, it also retains more vitamins and minerals in the food than other methods of cooking, such as boiling.

Not only that, the Yale dietitians say, microwave cooking also enhances the natural flavors of the food—a benefit since you will be less likely to add salt and sugar to gussy up your dishes. Microwaves cook foods in their own moisture, and don't require added fats, such as butter or oils. But if you want something to come out crispy, you're better off baking or broiling.

Here are some tips for successful and safe microwave cooking:

- Cover food well. Use microwave safe plastic wrap, wax paper or lids. To be safe, leave a little space for steam to escape.
- Use microwave-safe containers only. If you're not sure if your container is microwave safe, you can place an empty container in the microwave along with a separate cup of water. Microwave on high for 1 minute. If the container stays cool, it's safe. Dishes containing metal are generally NOT safe.
- Follow microwave directions on packaged foods.
- Cut large food items into smaller pieces for even cooking.
- If you cook meat, fish or poultry in the microwave, exercise extra caution by checking the internal temperature of the foods, and cook until the insides are no longer pink or bleeding.
- Airtight bags should be punctured before heating.
- You may need to add a tablespoon or two of water to dishes when reheating to keep moisture content at the desired level.
- When reheating, using 50 percent power sometimes works better.

## The great rebate rigmorole

Imagine this scenario: You go to the store to buy something—let’s say a printer—and you find just the one you want. But then you see a great deal—a printer that’s \$199 but offers a rebate

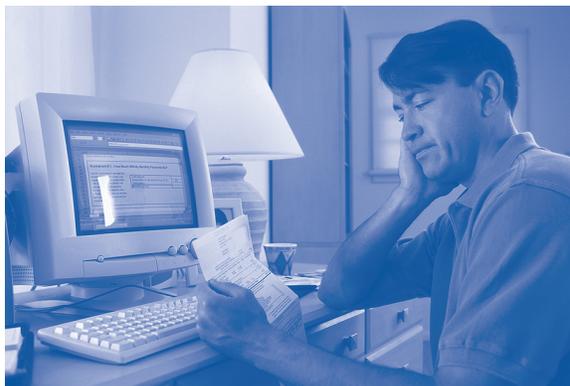
of \$100, making your grand total just \$99! You go for it. And once you get home, you tell yourself you’ll take care of the rebate in the morning. But you don’t. You keep putting it off until eventually you realize that you’ve paid \$199 for a printer you didn’t really want.

Forgoing a rebate is a common scenario that gets played out in a number of unintentional ways: not purchasing the item within the required time frame, waiting so long to mail in the rebate that the deadline expires, forgetting to include the bar code, making a mistake on the paperwork, failing to make a copy of the paperwork and proofs of purchase.

Lots of people regard rebates as a hassle—and they are—but they’re designed that way. The reason that companies can afford to offer them is because most people never redeem them—and the companies want to make sure that the fewest number of people possible get their money back. That’s why the requirements are so stringent—and often frustrating.

However, there are three things you can do to ensure that you get any rebate due to you:

1. Don’t procrastinate. Fill out the forms and clip the bar codes as soon as you get home. Don’t get immersed in the new product you’ve just purchased before you take care of business.
2. Look at your offer carefully—very carefully! Read all the small print. If you make a mistake at this stage of the process, the company can deny your eligibility for a rebate.
3. Make copies of everything before you drop the envelope in the mail. Whatever you’re required to send to the company—box tops, receipts, bar codes, coupons, letter—make a copy of each item in case you’re denied the rebate. With copies, you can appeal the company’s decision.



## Proven techniques for persuading people

Persuasion is a skill you need every day, whether you’re negotiating a big business deal or telling your grandchildren to eat their vegetables. Try these techniques for influencing people of any age in any situation:

- **Speak their language.** Listen to how people express themselves, particularly when it comes to sensory words. Some people will see things (“I don’t see what you mean”); others will hear (“That doesn’t sound like fun”); and others will feel (“I don’t feel good about that.”) Use their preferred mode of expression back to them (“I see your point . . . I hear what you’re saying . . .”) and they’ll accept your point more readily.
- **Use their names.** People love to hear the sound of their own name. Just don’t overdo it. For a new acquaintance, make sure you’re pronouncing it right, and don’t use it before you’ve established some sort of rapport.
- **Use action words.** You’ve got to ask for the response you want. Don’t ask someone to “try to” do something, or to “think about doing” it, if you need him or her to do it now. Be direct without being pushy.
- **Get your foot in the door.** You don’t have to lead off with your main point. First get the other person’s attention, and then apply some persuasive techniques: offering an additional benefit, changing your request to what you really want, or letting them turn you down now so he or she will be obligated to agree later.

## National Association of Senior Americans

Membership Services Office  
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Chesterfield, MO 63017

## Physician's bedside manner hinges on training

A new study has found that family members greatly appreciate compassionate end-of-life counsel from doctors.

But doctors, including oncologists and other specialists who frequently deal with terminal patients, do not routinely receive training in end-of-life conversations in medical school, residency training, or after they start to practice medicine.



The study found that when physicians were trained in this area, the skills learned had a positive and lasting effect on the satisfaction of the physicians and the patients. Sixty-five percent of the trained physicians said they would be expressing condolences more than half the time in the future. Historically, a mere 3 percent said they planned to do so.

The *Age of Wisdom* is published by:

### The National Association of Senior Americans

For information regarding your membership  
and association discounts, call or write:

**Membership Services Office**  
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Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all the information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Please consult your attorney or accountant before making any financial decisions.

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