



Enjoy healthy eyes for life

Whilst it is normal for eyes to change as we get older, permanent vision loss need not be a part of ageing. The majority of eye conditions that affect people as they get older are painless and progress slowly over many years, making self detection harder. Most eye conditions can be treated, and better results are more likely if detection takes place in the early stages. Regular eye checks help to detect problems in the early stages, which, when combined with medical intervention, can restore vision or prevent further vision impairment.

Cataract

A cataract is a clouding of the normally transparent lens inside the eye. Cataracts usually occur as a natural part of the ageing process. Cataracts can cause blurred vision, sensitivity to light and glare, driving difficulties particularly at night, decreased colour vision, frequent changes to a glasses prescription and a feeling of looking through a veil or curtain.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma affects the optic nerve at the back of the eye and is known as the 'sneak thief' of sight. It is caused by a blockage in the eyes fluid drainage network, which creates an increase in eye pressure. It results in a slow and painless loss of vision, with side vision being affected first. Symptoms of glaucoma include tunnel vision, reduced night vision and blurring of central vision in advanced cases.

Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

AMD causes loss of central, detailed vision. The condition is caused by a growth of abnormal blood vessels under the central part of the retina or macula. The vessels leak fluid and cause scar tissue that destroys central vision. Patients may notice that straight lines appear distorted or wavy, reading becomes difficult, they have difficulty distinguishing colours or vision is blocked by dark, empty spaces.

Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetes causes damage to retinal blood vessels, which may lead to loss of vision. Those most at risk are people who have had diabetes for a long period, diabetics with high blood pressure, people with high sugar levels or poorly managed diabetes, and diabetics who become pregnant. Symptoms include reduced vision and decreased night vision.

Retinal detachment

Retinal detachment is a separation of the retina from the back of the eye. If left detached, the retina can be permanently damaged, resulting in blindness. Patients may notice flashes and floaters in their field of vision, decreased vision and a feeling of looking through a veil or curtain.

People aged 35 and over are encouraged to have regular eye checks.