

Thanks a Billion!

WELL AWARE

The Importance of your Eyes

Vision is an essential part of everyday life, influencing how people of all ages learn, communicate, work, play, and interact with the world. Yet millions of Americans live with visual impairment, and many more remain at risk for eye disease and preventable eye injury.

The eyes are an important, but often overlooked, part of overall health. Despite the preventable nature of some vision impairments, many people do not receive recommended screenings and exams. A visit to an eye care professional for a comprehensive dilated eye exam can help to detect common vision problems and eye diseases, including: Diabetic retinopathy; Glaucoma; Cataract; Age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

These common vision problems often have no early warning signs. If a problem is detected, an eye care professional can prescribe corrective eyewear, medicine, or surgery to minimize vision loss and help a person see their best.

Healthy vision can help keep people safe when behind the wheel, participating in sports, or working with power tools around the home. It can also help to ensure a healthy and active lifestyle well into a person's later years. Educating and engaging families, communities, and the Nation is critical to ensuring that people have the information, resources, and tools needed for good eye health.

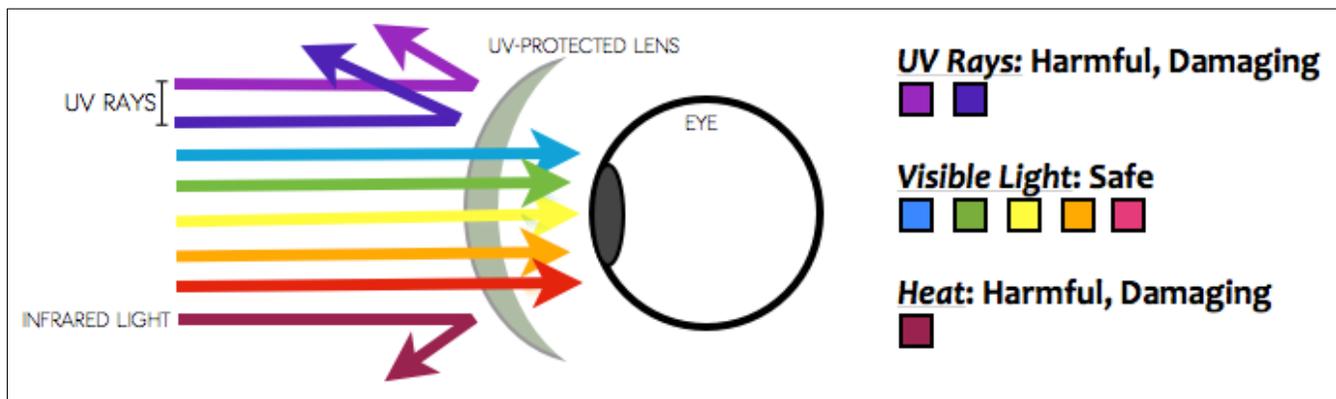
EYE FACTS

- ▲ Did you know that the average blink takes 1/3 of a second?
- ▲ Seeing is so important that it takes up more than 50% of the brain's functionality.
- ▲ Newborns don't shed tears, though they do know how to cry.
- ▲ You blink about 15-20 times in a minute.
- ▲ The most active muscles in your body are in your eyes.
- ▲ Your eyes can get sunburned.
- ▲ Blue eyed people are more tolerant of alcohol and less tolerant of the sun.
- ▲ If the human eye were a digital camera it would have 576 megapixels.
- ▲ We spend about 10% of our wake time with our eyes closed.
- ▲ An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.
- ▲ Chameleons can move their eyes in two directions at once.
- ▲ A single scallop can have over a hundred eyes.
- ▲ Your eyes contain around 107 million light sensitive cells.
- ▲ Dolphins can sleep with one eye open.
- ▲ Birds, cats and dogs have three eyelids.
- ▲ Yes, you can sneeze with your eyes open and no, your eyes won't fall out.
- ▲ Ommatophobia is the fear of eyes.
- ▲ Humans can see more shades of green than any other color.
- ▲ The world's most common eye color is brown.
- ▲ Dogs can't distinguish between red and green.
- ▲ The lifespan of the average eyelash is 5 months, the rest of your hair lasts 2-4 years.
- ▲ The eye has over 2 million moving parts.
- ▲ Your eyes contain 7 million cones, which help see color and detail and 100 million cells called rods, which help see better in the dark.

ALLEVIATE COMPUTER EYES

With the 20/20/20 Rule for Vision





Eight Steps to Prevent Vision Loss

(from cnib.ca)

Knowledge is power in the fight against vision loss. Here are ten simple things you can do to help protect your sight:

1. **Have your eyes examined regularly.**
By an eye-care professional, and don't ignore changes in your vision.
2. **Quit for your eyes.**
People who smoke are three to four times more likely to develop AMD, which is the number one cause of significant vision loss in people over 50 in Canada. Quitting now can reduce the risk.
3. **Get healthy.**
Increase your intake of fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, fresh fruit and dark green leafy vegetables as they provide nutrients and antioxidants that are healthy for the macula. Be active: excess weight, a sedentary lifestyle and high blood pressure are all risk factors for AMD and diabetic retinopathy.
4. **Protect your eyes from sunlight.**
Exposure to sunlight is associated with a higher risk of developing AMD and cataracts. Wear a hat with a brim, and choose sunglasses that provide at least 98 per cent protection from ultraviolet (UV) rays: check the vendor tag for the UV rating before you buy.
5. **Wear eye protection.**
When playing sports or working with power tools, protect your eyes with Canadian Standards Association-approved safety glasses. You don't need a prescription for them, and most hardware and sporting-goods stores carry a good selection.
6. **Consider vitamin supplements.**
If you are diagnosed with dry AMD, talk to your doctor about using a special formulation of high-dosage vitamin supplements that has been known

to be effective in lowering the risk of developing the advanced form of AMD.

7. **Prevent diabetes**
Reduce your risk of many kinds of vision loss. Most people with diabetes are at a high risk of developing diabetic retinopathy and other vision problems.
8. **Keeping drinking moderate**
Lower the risk of developing cataracts, since heavy drinking of alcoholic beverages is a known risk factor.

Why Hearing is Important

You know hearing is important. Healthy hearing allows us to communicate. To socialize with friends. To alert us of trouble and work more effectively. Healthy hearing even helps us relax.

When your hearing declines—and it does for most people at some point—it can feel like much of your life is going downhill. The fact is, hearing loss doesn't just affect you physically. It can impact your emotional and social health, too. Left untreated, hearing loss is often related to:

- Negative attitudes, anger and irritability
- Stress, fatigue and tension
- Depression
- Loneliness
- Desire to avoid social scenes
- Unsafe situations due to decreased alertness
- Lower job performance
- Trouble remembering things or following directions

Many people chalk these symptoms up to old age. But in truth, hearing loss occurs in every age group. It's especially important to catch hearing loss in children, since healthy hearing is so essential to language development and learning skills. But adults young and old also need to watch for signs of hearing loss, so they can make the most of their quality of life.

The key to keeping your hearing healthy is knowing how much loud sound you're exposed to. A 'noise diet' can protect your hearing from future problems.

Most cases of deafness are caused by damage to the tiny hair cells in the inner ear. This damage can be caused by too much noise, and it's permanent. Noise-related hearing loss is usually irreversible. It is important that we all take steps to prevent noise-related damage. The key to keeping your hearing intact is to avoid loud noise.

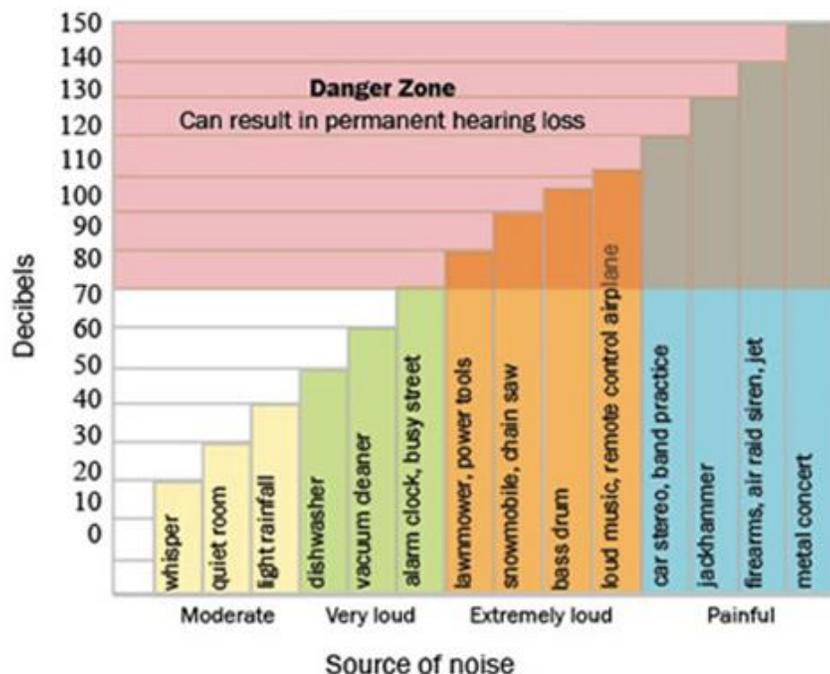
The louder the sound, the less time you can safely listen to it. Just because a sound isn't annoying doesn't make it safe.

Noisy occupations, such as working in factories or on roadworks, used to be the most common cause of hearing problems. But with the tightening of health and safety rules, working in a noisy industry should be less hazardous to your hearing, provided you wear the correct ear protection.

Nowadays it's recreational loud noise that's the main problem, especially from MP3 players, iPods, as well as noisy clubs and music gigs. That's thought to be why hearing loss is increasingly affecting younger people.

There are a variety of apps that can help monitor your exposure to loud noise, such as:

→ **SoundMeter+** provides accurate sound levels and noise exposure readings to help prevent hearing loss.



→ **Play It Down** is a free iPhone and iPad app that allows users to assess their hearing ability and noisy environments.

10 Tips for Safer Listening

1. Use earplugs

The louder the noise and the longer you're exposed to it, the greater the chance of damaging your hearing. Protect your ears with ear protectors – earplugs or earmuffs – and get away from the noise as quickly or as often as you can. If you can't leave the venue, take regular breaks. A 10-minute rest break will give your ears some time to recover.

2. Turn down the music

Don't listen to your personal music player at very high volumes and never to drown out background noise. If the music is uncomfortable for you to listen to, or you can't hear external sounds when you've got your headphones on, then it's too loud. It's also too loud if the person next to you can hear the music from your headphones.

3. Use the 60:60 rule

To enjoy music from your MP3 player safely, listen to your music at 60% of the maximum volume for no more than 60 minutes a day. Many MP3 players have a 'smart volume' feature, so use it if you have one. It will help you regulate the volume.

4. *Wear headphones*



When listening to your personal music player, choose noise-cancelling headphones, or go retro with older muff-type headphones. These block out background noise and allow you to have the volume lower.

Ear-bud style headphones and in-the-ear headphones are less effective at drowning out background noise. Try to take regular breaks from your headphones, to give your ears a rest.

5. *Turn down the dial*

Turn down the volume on your TV, radio or hi-fi a notch. Even a small reduction in volume can make a big difference to the risk of damage to your hearing. If you need to raise your voice to be heard above the sound, turn it down.

6. *Use earplugs when listening to live music*

They can reduce average sound levels by between 15 and 35 decibels. They're widely available at many live music venues and shouldn't spoil your enjoyment of the music.

7. *Don't put up with work noise*

If you're experiencing noise at work, talk to your human resources (HR) department or your manager and ask for advice on reducing the noise and getting hearing protection.

8. *Wear ear protectors*

Wear ear protectors (earplugs or earmuffs) if you are using noisy equipment such as power drills, saws, sanders or lawn mowers.

9. *Be careful in the car*

Listening to music in a confined space increases the risk of hearing damage.



10. *Have a hearing detox*

Give your ears time to recover after they've been exposed to loud noise. According to Action on Hearing Loss, you need at least 16 hours of rest for your ears to recover after spending around two hours in 100dB sound, for example in a club. Reducing this recovery time increases the risk of permanent deafness.

Do you have Hearing Loss?

Hearing loss frequently goes unnoticed and because it happens gradually, many people are in denial. They often stop communicating and withdraw from family, friends and social situations because they can't understand what is being said. Here are some common signs of hearing loss:



- speaking louder than necessary in conversation
- constantly asking for words to be repeated
- straining to hear
- misunderstanding conversations, especially in noisy situations
- favouring one ear
- thinking that people always mumble
- turning the television or radio up louder than usual
- having difficulty hearing on the telephone
- withdrawing from social contact
- ringing or buzzing in one or both ears
- appearing dull and disinterested, slow to respond, or just not quite "with it"

If you are experiencing any of these signs of hearing loss, contact your doctor to make an appointment for a hearing test.

From Canadian Hearing Society

Practice Safe... Everything

We all have regular reminders at work to work safe, policies are in place and resources are provided to ensure we all work safe.

Being safe at home, in your community, during your activities, driving, having fun and living doesn't come with a safety sign near the door reminding you daily to be safe.



Make a Household Emergency Plan

It will take about 20 minutes to make a family emergency plan [online](#). You can then print it out.

Before starting, you will need to think about:

- Safe exits from home and neighbourhood
- Meeting places to reunite with family or roommates
- Designated person to pick up children should you be unavailable
- Contact persons close-by and out-of-town
- Health and insurance information
- Places for your pet to stay
- Risks in your region
- Location of your fire extinguisher, water valve, electrical panel, gas valve and floor drain

Seasonal Safety Reminders

Be extra vigilant for wildlife crossing roads, especially at dawn and dusk. Fall is mating season for deer and the start of the winter migration, which means wildlife are more active now than at other times of the year.

With the cooler weather, people are shutting their windows and turning on the furnace. A decrease in fresh air intake into your home makes now the time to check your carbon monoxide detector.

Remember that carbon monoxide is a silent killer. You should have carbon monoxide detectors in all the sleeping areas of your home.

Smoke Alarms Save Lives

Investigations into home fire deaths very often find that a smoke alarm did not sound. It may have been disconnected or not in working order. The batteries may have been dead, or someone may have taken them out.

The Canada Safety Council advises all Canadians to make sure their smoke alarms are working. A dead unit is worse than none at all — it can give you a false sense of security.

Smoke Alarm Basics

You need a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Single level homes and apartments should have smoke alarms near the kitchen and all sleeping areas.

Test your alarm monthly by pushing the test button. Once a year, use a smoldering cotton string, cigarette or incense until the smoke makes the alarm sound. If the alarm is battery-powered and doesn't sound, replace it with a new battery and try again. If it's electrically connected to household circuits and doesn't sound, check the fuse and try again. In either case, if the alarm still isn't working, replace the entire unit.



Replace the batteries twice a year, or when you hear intermittent beeping. Don't use rechargeable batteries. Unlike regular batteries, they lose their charge without emitting any warning signal. Smoke alarms can be electrically powered, battery powered or a combination of both. Whatever kind you have, remember they don't last forever. Err on the side of safety - replace them every five years with new ones.

Make sure everyone in your home recognizes the sound of the alarm and knows what to do in case of fire - two ways out of every room and a prearranged meeting place outside.

Practice your home fire escape plan regularly. Once out, stay out, and call the fire department from the nearest phone. Never go back into your home until the fire department says it is safe.

Types of Smoke Alarms

A flaming fire burns combustibles quickly, spreads rapidly and generates a lot of heat, but only a little smoke. Cooking fat or grease, flammable liquids, newspapers, paint, and cleaning solutions all burn quickly and create more flames than smoke. *Ionization* type smoke alarms typically respond first to fast flaming fires. They are best suited for rooms that contain highly combustible materials.

A smoldering fire produces a lot of smoke but little heat. Careless smoking, for example, may lead to fires that can smolder for hours before bursting into flame. *Photoelectric* type smoke alarms typically respond first to slow smoldering fires and are less prone to nuisance alarms near the kitchen area. These models are best suited for living rooms, bedrooms and near kitchens.

For maximum protection, install at least one *ionization* and one *photoelectric* type of smoke alarm on each level of your home.

Halloween - It's Not Just for Kids

Adults also celebrate this festive time with parties, costumes and ghoulish food. These occasions can be great fun and with a little common sense and caution, they can also be safe.

Costumes should have the same safety attention as children do. Masks should not interfere with vision (use face makeup) and the costume should not cause you to trip. Accessories should not be sharp or dangerous to carry.



Decorations and special effects need to be handled with caution. Candles are popular but must never be left unattended. Dry ice

has wonderful qualities for a Halloween party but remember that it can cause freezing burns and must not be handled with bare hands. It can cause injury if you ingest it, so keep dry ice chips out of beverages.

Drinking and driving do not mix. If alcohol is being served, be sure to have a plan. Consider a car key collection at the beginning of the party and have a designated driver or call a taxi service.

Consider food allergies when hosting a party. Be informed as to any guests that may have allergies and avoid serving the food. Common allergies include nuts, peanuts, dairy products, and shellfish.

Once a few precautions have been taken, let the “monster mash” begin.

Winter Tires

The onset of cooler weather signals that it's time to put winter tires on your vehicle. Properly equip your vehicle this season.



- All-season tires do not provide sufficient traction through heavy snow. Winter tires have treads that dig down to grip into ice and snow, and they are made of material that remains pliable up to -40°C.
- Change over to winter tires once the temperature dips below 7°C. If you can see your breath outside, it's time to winterize your ride!
- Install four identical tires to maintain optimal control of your vehicle. Do not mix-and-match tires.
- When should you get new winter tires? That depends on many factors such as the make of the tire, how much and where you drive.
- Transport Canada recommends replacing winter tires worn close to four millimetres of tread

From Canada Safety Council