

策劃及捐助 Initiated and Funded by:



計劃伙伴 Project Partner:





### Demand on you CARE: Communication Challenges: Vision, Hearing and Speech

# Chapter 2: Visual Impairment and Communication in the Older Adults

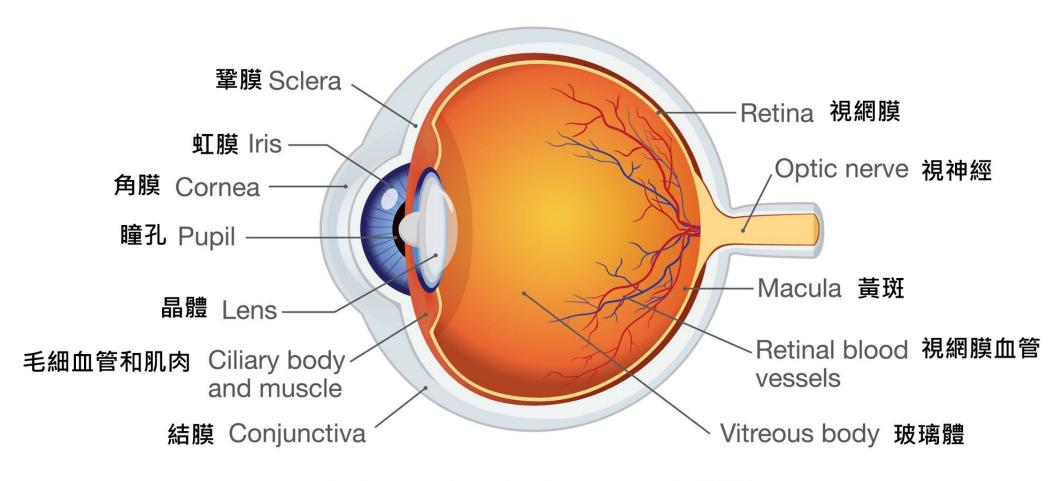
ELDER009

### Overview

#### In this chapter, we will discuss:

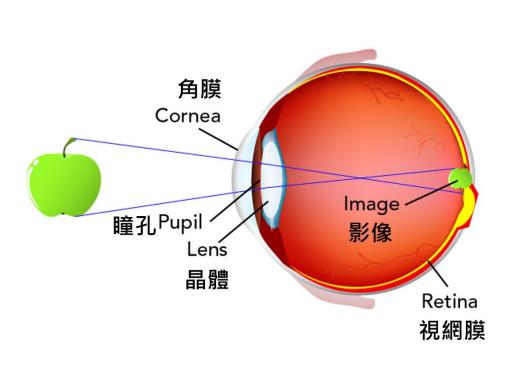
- Age-related changes in vision
- Warning signs of eye problems
- Eye problems, eye diseases and management in older adults
- Tips for eye protection in older adults
- Daily life advices for vision impairment

### **Eye Anatomy**

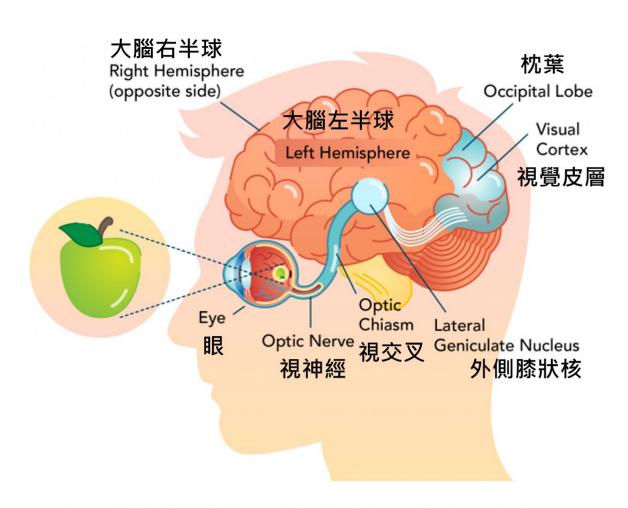


https://www.thoughtco.com/how-the-human-eye-works-4155646

### How do the eyes see?



正常視力 Normal Vision

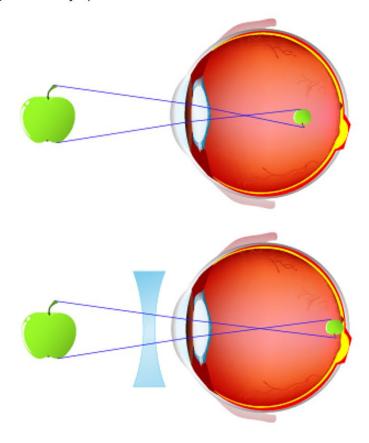


https://letstalkscience.ca/educational-resources/backgrounders/how-we-see

### Myopia

#### 雙凹透鏡矯正近視和晶狀體的示意圖

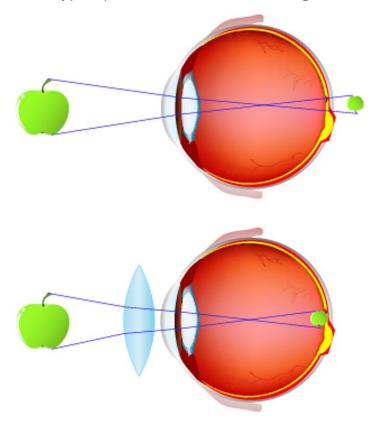
Diagram of myopia and lens correction with a biconcave lens



### Hyperopia

#### 使用雙凸透鏡的遠視和晶狀體矯正圖

Diagram of hyperopia and lens correction using a biconvex lens



https://letstalkscience.ca/educational-resources/backgrounders/how-we-see

### Age-related Changes in Vision

Vision changes in older adults:

- Diminishing of vision
- Reduced visual field
- Slow adaptation to light and dark contrast
- →Increase the risk of falls in the elderly



Dual vision and hearing impairments are common among older adults.

### Age-related Changes in Vision

- Presbyopia
- Ectropion
- Entropion
- Dry eye syndrome
- Excessive tearing

### Presbyopia

#### Definition:

A refractive error that increases with age

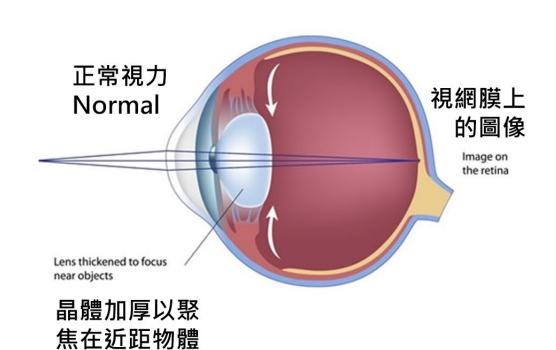
#### Symptoms:

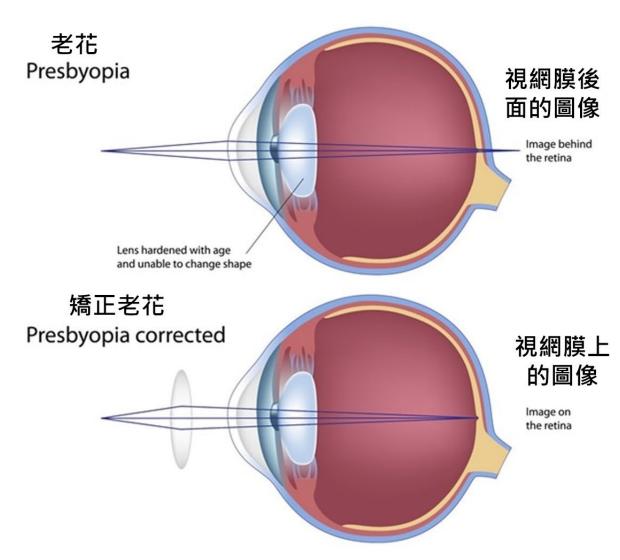
- Vision started to decline after 40 years old.
- Inability to focus and see close object (e.g. reading)

#### Causes:

- The degree of presbyopia depends on how much adjustment ability is left in the eyes.
- From age 40, the lens in the eye slowly loses its elasticity  $\rightarrow$  which affects the adjustment ability of the eyes, and decreases the zoom capacity.
- At age 60 or older, insufficiency adjustment of the lens (accommodation) → necessary to rely on the reading glasses to look at close object.

### Presbyopia





https://www.news-medical.net/health/Presbyopia-Age-Related-Farsightedness.aspx

### Ectropion

#### **Definition:**

• The edge of the eyelid turns outward, more common with the lower eyelid. This leaves the inner eyelid surface exposed and prone to irritation.

#### Causes:

- Due to old age, the eyelid and its ligament tissue are loose.
- Eyelid scar, eyelid trauma or facial nerve palsy can also cause ectropion.



Photo source: Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

### **Ectropion**

#### Symptoms:

- Eyelid turns outward which leaves the conjunctiva exposed and even make the eyes unable to close completely
- Eyes overflowing with tears, excessive secretion from the eyes, and eyelid scar, which affect vision.

#### **Treatments:**

- The optometrist will examine whether the cornea will be dry and damaged due to ectropion
- Use eye lubricant to keep the surface of the cornea moist
- Use adhesive tape to keep your eyelids closed at night
- If the symptoms are severe or the appearance is affected → Undergo surgical correction

### Entropion

#### **Definition:**

- The eyelid edge turns inward, causing the eyelashes to constantly rub against the cornea and conjunctiva, making the eyes uncomfortable and even damaging the cornea and conjunctiva.
- The lower eyelid is more prone to turn inward than the upper eyelid.

#### Causes:

- Ageing 

  The tissue supporting the lower eyelid is loose, causing the edge of the eyelid to turn inward
- Long-term eyelid inflammation, injury to the inner surface of the eyelid, or scar shrinkage due to chronic infection.

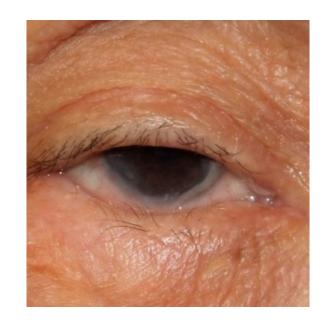


Photo source: Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

### **Entropion**

#### Symptoms:

- Inverted eyelids and lashes can rub the cornea and eyeball
- Red eyes, tingling pain, foreign body sensation, watery eyes, etc.
- Severe cases can cause corneal damage, causing keratitis and affecting vision

#### Treatment:

- If the condition is not severe, artificial tears can relieve the symptoms.
- In severe cases of entropion, corrective surgery can be performed to improve the problem and restore the normal position of eyelid edges and eye lash.
- If entropion is caused by chronic inflammation (such as trachoma) or scab, mucosal transplantation can be performed to treat eyelid scars.

### Dry Eye Syndrome

Reasons why the older adults are more prone to having dry eye syndrome:

- Decreased lacrimal secretion
  - -Old age
  - -Immune diseases such as systemic lupus erythematosus and rheumatoid arthritis
  - -Drug side effects such as the use of antihistamines, antidepressants, and hormone supplements due to menopausal symptoms
  - -Other diseases such as diabetes and hyperthyroidism
- Unstable tear quality (mainly divided into three categories: evaporative, aqueousdeficient and mixed)
- Meibomian gland dysfunction (MGD)

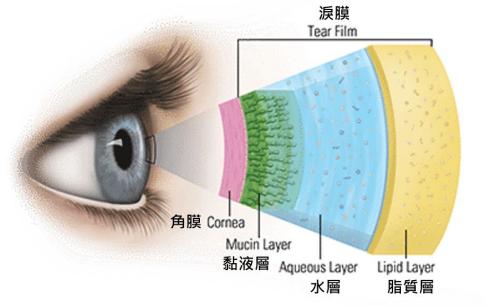
### Dry Eye Syndrome

Human tears have the following three layers, as long as one of them has problem, it can cause dry eye syndrome.

- 1. Lipid layer: Insufficient oil content makes tears easy to volatilize
- 2. Aqueous layer: Insufficient secretion of pure tears
- 3. Mucin layer: Poor ocular mucins, less tears

Symptoms: (Symptoms are the same as common dry eye)

- Dry eye
- Foreign body sensation
- Red eye



https://www.adamscheinermd.com/new-advances-for-dry-eye-treatment

### Dry Eye Syndrome

#### Role of tears:

- There are strips of meibomian glands in the upper and lower eyelids that secrete oil and form a lipid layer in the tear film
- Oil in the tear 

  Slow down the volatilization of tears, keep ocular surface moist, reduce the chance of corneal damage or virus entering the eye

#### Treatment recommendations:

- 1.Evaporative → Wear goggles to keep out the wind and avoid being blown directly by the wind
- 2. Meibomian gland dysfunction → Close your eyes and apply warm compress for 10-20 minutes every morning and evening with a hot pack or hot towel, to warm and liquefy the oil blocked in the eyelid gland, which is easier to discharge when blinking, and slow down the evaporation time of tears.

### **Excessive tearing**

Excessive tearing may cause annoyance and inconvenience.

#### Symptoms:

- Long-term watery eyes
- Red, sore and swollen eyes
- Pus & thick discharge from the eye if suffering from dacryocystitis



Photo source: Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

#### Causes of persistent watery eyes in the older adult:

- Eyelids are loose as we age. Tears cannot flow into the small holes that collect tears, then down into the throat.
- Obstruction in the tear ducts
- Inversed eyelash, eyelid inflammation and ectropion will stimulate the eyes to secrete tears
- People suffering from allergic rhinitis or allergic conjunctivitis
- Excessive tearing can also be one of the symptoms of dry eye



### Warning Signs of Eye Problems

- Blurred vision not corrected by appropriate corrective glasses
- Persistent eye pain or acute sharp pain
- Over-sensitivity to light. Halo or rainbow is seen around lights
- Partial loss of visual field
- Red eyes or burning sensation experienced

- Sudden appearance of large amounts of floaters or black spots in the visual field
- Abnormal growth in the eye or on the eyelid
- The transparent part of the eye looks cloudy
- Eyes become watery, with persistent discharge or crust

In addition to age-related changes in vision, older adults should also pay attention to the above warning signs. Seek medical advice immediately to avoid affecting vision if having any of the above sign.

## Eye problems, eye diseases and management in older adults

- Cataract
- Glaucoma (chronic vs acute)
- Macular degeneration
- Diabetic retinopathy, also known as diabetic eye disease (DED),
   Hypertensive retinopathy

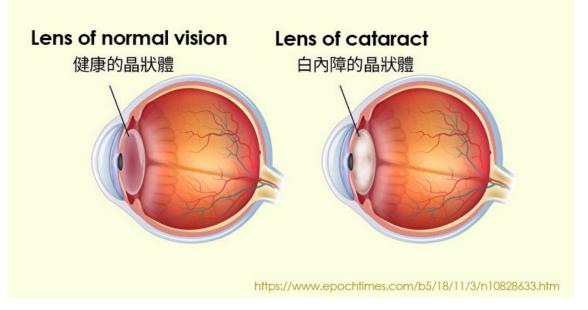
#### **Definition:**

- As the lens becomes cloudy and opaque, the light cannot be concentrated, resulting in decreased vision
- Lens ages with aging; diabetes, trauma, steroids, and congenital factors can all cause cataract

 Cataracts are not regarded as presence or absence, but depend on the mature level (just like steamed eggs). Early cataracts will not have much impact on vision, and only need regular eye examinations.

#### Causes:

- Old age
- Iritis
- Eye trauma
- Long-term use of steroid drugs
- Diabetes



#### Common symptoms of cataract:

- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Change of color tone
- Decreased contrast sensitivity
- Even double image
- But the eyes will not be red, swollen, sore

Simulate the vision of eyes without cataract





Simulate the vision of eyes having mild cataract that is able to cope with daily life

Simulate the vision that cataract began to affect daily life, such as looking at the bus number.





Simulate the vision of severe cataract

#### **Treatment:**

- At present, there is no clinical drug that can restore cataract
- Cataract surgery to implant an artificial lens to restore vision is the contemporary treatment.
- Since the cataract will get worse over time, surgery may be required when it starts to affect daily life. With current technology, it is best not to wait until the cataract is fully mature, as it is a minimally invasive surgery



#### **Hospital Authority Public-Private Partnership Programme-**

Cataract Surgeries Programme (CSP)

Patients on Hospital Authority clusters' routine cataract surgery waiting lists can join the programme, and receive cataract surgery performed by private ophthalmologists.

https://www4.ha.org.hk/ppp/en/ppp-programmes/csp/programme-intro

### Glaucoma (chronic vs acute)

#### Definition:

- progressive optic neuropathy and peripheral visual field loss
- Glaucoma is generally divided into acute and chronic

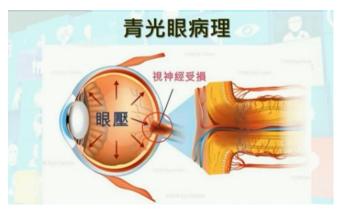


Photo source: Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

	Acute glaucoma	Chronic glaucoma
Symptoms	Blurred vision, headache, nausea, vomiting, and see a rainbow-colored circle The reason for the above symptoms is that the drainage angle is suddenly blocked, causing the circulation of the aqueous humor secreted by the ciliary body to be blocked, leading to an increase in intraocular pressure. If it cannot be treated in time, it may cause blindness in a short time.	The early stage of glaucoma affects the optic nerve cells which responsible for the peripheral visual field. The patient is less sensitive to the peripheral visual field. Therefore, apart from regular eye examinations, it is difficult to detect it earlier.
Intraocular pressure	Intraocular pressure is generally elevated. Although patients may feel pain, there are some older adults who feel no pain even when the intraocular pressure rises to 60 degrees (Normal intraocular pressure is 10-21).	Intraocular pressure is generally normal

### Glaucoma (Chronic vs Acute)



Simulate glaucoma vision

### Glaucoma (chronic vs acute)

People who are more likely to develop glaucoma:

- Family history
- Over 45 years old
- Need to take steroids
- Deep myopia (above 600 degrees)
- Ocular hypertension
- Since glaucoma can occur without warning signs, it is important to regularly check for the health of intraocular nerve and intraocular pressure.

### Glaucoma (chronic vs acute)

#### **Treatment:**

- There is no radical cure for glaucoma temporarily.
- The general treatment is to reduce the intraocular pressure as much as possible to avoid further degeneration of the optic nerve.
- According to research conducted by the HKU and PolyU, it was found that wolfberry can protect the retinal ganglion cell on the retina from glaucoma.



#### Hospital Authority Glaucoma Public-Private Partnership Programme

Patients with glaucoma receiving treatment in the Hospital Authority will be invited for voluntary participation and receive private specialist medical services in the community.

https://www4.ha.org.hk/ppp/ppp-programmes/glaucomappp/programme-intro

#### **Definition:**

- Common eye diseases in the older adults, the number one killer of blindness among people over 60 years old.
- Everyone has macula lutea. The macula lutea is located in the center of the retina and is responsible for central vision. It is the most accurate position of vision.
- Therefore, macula lutea is an important structure of the eye, and macular degeneration can greatly affect vision and daily life.

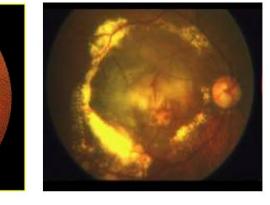
Macular degeneration can be divided into dry and wet:

- Dry macular degeneration, accounting for about 90% of cases
- It does not affect the eyesight of the patient in the early stage, and the development is slow. There is no effective treatment for dry macular degeneration, only focusing on prevention and slowing down the deterioration.

• Once it deteriorates and turn into wet macular degeneration, the impact on vision

will be greater.

Dry macular degeneration



### Wet macular degeneration

Photo source: Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

#### Symptoms:

- Generally, "dry" age-related macular degeneration has no symptoms
- Symptoms of "wet" age-related macular degeneration include:
  - > Deformation and bending appear when looking at a straight line
  - > Deformation of the scene
  - > Blurred central vision, difficulty in reading and recognition
  - ➤In severe cases, a blind spot gradually forms in the center of vision



Simulated macular degraded vision

When reading, straight lines become wavy or the image becomes blurry and some area become blank

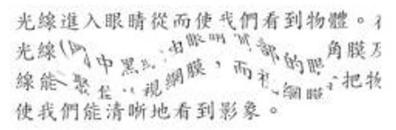


Photo source: Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

People who are more likely to develop macular degeneration:

• The older one gets, the greater the risk.

People aged 50-60: about 2%

>75 years old: about 30%

- People who spend a lot of time in the sun (ultraviolet light)
- Risk factors such as smoking, alcohol abuse, high cholesterol, and genetics

**Community Resources** 









香港視網膜病變協會、香港醫護聯盟合辦-眼內注射藥物資助計劃 (Chinese version only) http://www.projectconcern.org.hk/node/585



#### 黃斑病變治療援助計劃(Chinese version only)

https://www.eye-

fund.org/%e6%85%88%e5%96%84%e5%85%ac%e7%9b%8a/%e 9%bb%83%e6%96%91%e7%97%85%e8%ae%8a%e6%b2%bb%e 7%99%82%e6%8f%b4%e5%8a%a9%e8%a8%88%e5%8a%83/

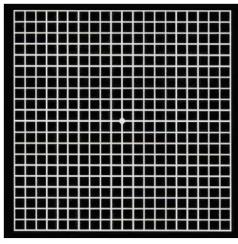
#### **Self-assessment method:**

#### **Amsler grid**

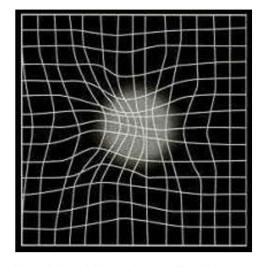
- It is a 10cm x 10cm grid drawn with thick white lines on a black background, with a white dot in the center.
- The grid helps to detect the early signs of macular degeneration, including wet age-related macular degeneration and macular bleeding or fluid accumulation caused by deep myopia (600 degrees).
- However, this cannot replace regular detailed eye examinations by an ophthalmologist.

#### How to use the Amsler grid for self-assessment:

- 1. Place the grid table at a distance of 30 cm from the eye level, with sufficient and even light.
- 2. If the user wear glasses daily, they need to wear the original glasses for assessment. The older adult should also wear presbyopic glasses for examination.
- 3. Cover your left eye with your hand, and stare at the white spot in the center of the grid with your right eye.
- 4. When staring at the central white spot, if one founds that the white line in the center of the square table or other areas is curved, broken or distorted, or the position of the square part is blurred or vacant, which may be the problem of the macular area in the fundus, and it is necessary to seek an ophthalmologist for detailed examination as soon as possible.
- 5. Repeat the above steps for the left eye.



「<u>Amsler</u>」 grid



#### Simulate vision of macular degeneration

Photo source: Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

### Eye problems caused by chronic diseases-Diabetes/hypertensive retinopathy

#### **Definition:**

- Both hypertension and diabetes affect the blood vessels in the eyes
- Continuous high blood pressure → blood vessels in the eyes have sclerosis, bleeding, and papillary edema, which are collectively referred to as "hypertensive retinopathy".
- The disease is similar to the condition of diabetic eyes, it can also affect vision and cause permanent damage in severe cases.
- If one has diabetes, it will significantly increases the risk of retinopathy.
- Therefore, one cannot ignore the impact of blood pressure on the body and eye health. In addition to controlling blood sugar, attention must be paid to the problem of high blood pressure.

### Eye problems caused by chronic diseases-Diabetes/hypertensive retinopathy

#### Dietary recommendations for the prevention of diabetes/hypertension:

- Balanced diet
- Less salt
- Less sugar
- Low fat
- Avoid foods with high cholesterol
- Diabetic patients should avoid adding too much sugar in drinks, and try to replace with sweetener substitute
- → Keep blood pressure and blood sugar at a stable level to reduce the burden on blood vessels in the eyes.

### Tips for Eye Protection in Older Adults

- Indoors
  - 20-20-20 rule
  - -Balance the light around
- Outdoors
- Lifestyle and diet habits
- Eyelid cleaning care
- Regular eye test

# Indoors

#### 20-20-20 rule

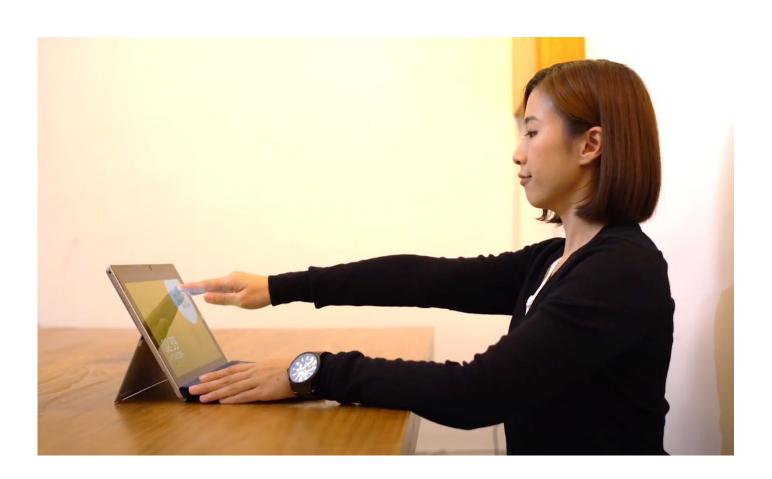
- Rest your eyes regularly
- Take a break every 20 minutes and look at an object 20 feet (six meters) away for at least 20 seconds
- If you can't take a break too frequently, you must take a break at least once an hour. You can go to the toilet, drink a glass of water, or have a snack

# Indoors

#### Balance the light around

Suggestions for computer screen position:

- ➤ The screen should be placed in front of about an arm's length, 18-28 inches (45-70 cm) away
- The top of the screen is at the eye level, and the best angle is 10-20 degrees when looking down



# Indoors

#### Enough, balanced and stable light

- The muscles that control the size of pupil and light response will lose some strength with age, causing the pupils gradually become smaller and less light enters the eyes, which affects visual performance.
- ➤ Rod cells dominate our vision in the dark environment. As rod cells begin to have a slower recovery of night vision, middle-aged and older adults are less able to adapt in the dark, leading to slower responses that may increase the risk of falls and traffic accidents at night.

# **Outdoors**

- UV light can cause cataracts and macular degeneration
- Use protective lenses against UV light when working outdoors for a long period of time
- Choose lenses that can filter light with a wavelength of 400nm or below
- Older adults can also choose color-changing lenses, to avoid the trouble of changing sunglasses when going in or out of the room
- Color-changing lenses can effectively block "strong light" (visible light) and "UV light" from entering the eyes
- The stronger the UV light exposed to the color-changing lens, the darker the color becomes



The picture shows the same pair of glasses with color-changing lenses. When the intensity of the surrounding ultraviolet rays increases, the color of the lenses will change from transparent (left) to darker (right).

(Provided by Dr. Bruce CHAN, a registered optometrist of Jockey Club Cadenza Hub)

# Lifestyle and diet habit

#### Food suggestions for eye care:

- Foods containing anthocyanin, such as red, purple, purple, blue and black vegetables and fruits, among which berries are particularly high in content. (e.g., eggplant, purple sweet potato, blueberry)
- Foods containing lutein, including dark green vegetables and yellow fruits.
   (e.g., spinach, corn, yellow/red/green pepper, carrot, kale, orange, mango)
- Foods containing omega-3, such as fresh fish
- Consume moderate amount of berries and nuts. Nuts have mineral zinc in the surface, which can delay the development of dry macular degeneration

#### Life style suggestions:

- Avoid smoking and drinking
- Aerobic exercise can delay vision deterioration

# Eyelid cleansing care

If excessive oil secretion in eyelid, coupled with improper eye care, it may cause eye dermatitis.

A simple and comfortable eye cleansing method can reduce the chance of developing eyelid dermatitis.

What you need: warm boiled water, cotton swabs, a small amount of neutral shampoo (or baby shampoo without astringent formula), mirror, cup

#### **Cleaning steps:**

- 1. Wash your hands first to avoid bringing more bacteria into your eyes during cleaning.
- 2. First remove secretions, scales, loose eyelashes, etc.
- 3. Pour warm water into the cup. If excessive oil secretion in eyelid, you can add a drop of shampoo.
- 4. Facing the mirror, first pull down one eyelid and use a wet cotton swab to clean the eyelid from the inside of the canthus to the outside. Remember to also clean the roots of the eyelashes.
- 5. Each side of the cotton swab can only be used once. Use a new small cotton ball every time you clean your eyes, and wipe 3-5 times on one eye in total.
- 6. When you wipe upper eyelid, look downward slightly; When you wipe the lower eyelid, look upward slightly.
- 7. Repeat the above steps on the other eye.

#### **Precautions:**

- Recommended to clean 3 times a day when the eyes are inflammated or itchy; when the condition improves, clean once every morning and evening before freshening up.
- 2. If you have an allergic reaction to baby shampoo, including rash and swelling on the eyelids, stop using it immediately and seek medical advice.

# Regular Comprehensive Eye Examination

- Regular comprehensive eye examination can identify problems early and receive appropriate treatment
- Regular monitoring and treatment are required when suffering from chronic degenerative diseases, such as macular degeneration and glaucoma
- An ophthalmologist or optometrist can provide advice to patients with low vision and use assistive devices to help with daily activities

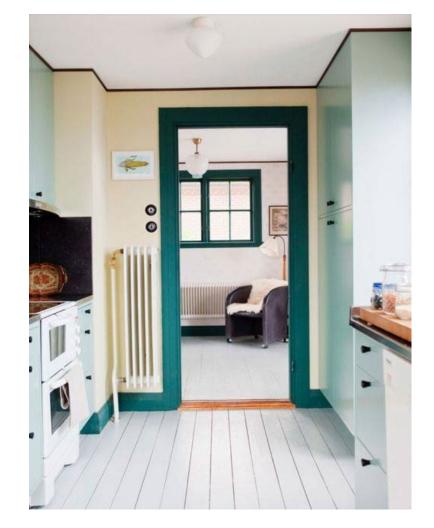


# Daily Life Advices for Vision Impairment

- Home Environment
- Assistive Devices

# **Home Environment**

- Have enough, balanced, stable and soft lighting or natural light.
- The color contrast between the door frame and the wall should be obvious.



## **Home Environment**

 Avoid color contrast of objects is too close, because it is difficult for older adults to judge the distance of the object (it is prone to having accidents for the bench on the right).





Normal vision

Vision of visual impaired person

# **Home Environment**

- Use non-reflective floors to reduce glare interference.
- Tape down the carpet and remove the wires from the aisle to reduce the risk of falls and injuries.





Reflective floor

Non-reflective floor

### **Assistive Devices**

• Fitted with proper visual aids; magnifying glass, binoculars or computer software with magnifying function can also be used.







# **Assistive Devices**

- Pay attention to home environment to facilitate their daily life.
- Add tactile marks on home appliance buttons.





## **Assistive Devices**

Household items

For example: Simple TV remote controller, large key phone, magnifying nail clippers







- End of Chapter 2-

# Reference

- Chu, P.H.W., Li, H.Y., Chin, M.P., So, K.F., & Chan, H.H.L. (2013). Effect of Lycium Barbarum (Wolfberry) Polysaccharideson Preserving Retinal Function after Partial Optic Nerve Transection. PLoS One, 8 (12), e81339. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0081339.
- de Paiva, C.S (2017). Effects of Aging in Dry Eye. International Ophthalmology Clinics, 57(2), 47–64. http://doi.org/10.1097/IIO.000000000000170
- Society For Neuroscience. (2014). Exercise may slow progression of retinal degeneration. Retrieved from https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/02/140207114059.htm
- The University of Hong Kong. (2017). Prevention of Ageing-associated Neurodegeneration in Alzheimer's Disease and Glaucoma with a Wolfberry Extract. Retrieved from https://www.ke.hku.hk/story/all/wolfberry-extract
- We 60。〈視光師:漸進鏡片並非人人合適佩戴〉。2021年5月3日,取自https://www.we60.com/eng/health-article-optometrist-3
- We 60。〈為何香港變色鏡片不太黑?〉。2021年5月3日,取自https://www.we60.com/eng/health-article-optometrist-5
- 香港中文大學眼科及視覺科學學系。(2015年6月10日)。〈眼瞼出現病變 可引起眼乾、眼凸、眼睫毛倒生等多種不適〉。取自 <a href="https://www.ovs.cuhk.edu.hk/zh/%E7%9C%BC%E7%9E%BC%E7%97%85%E8%AE%8A\_%E5%8F%AF%E5%BC%95%E8%B5%B7%E7%9C%BC%E4%B9%BE%E7%9C%BC%E5%87%B8%E7%9C%BC%E7%9D%AB%E6%AF%9B%E5%80%92%E7%94%9F%E5%A4%9A%E7%A8%AE%E4%B8%8D%E9%81%A9/</a>
- 陳文彬(2017年11月23日)。〈認識白內障〉。《信健康》。取自 https://health.hkej.com/health/article?suid=1708179&subjectline=%E8%AA%8D%E8%AD%98%E7%99%BD%E5%85%A7%E9%9A%9C