

Can Cataracts Be Prevented?



Vision should be cherished at every stage in life. However, as one ages and vision changes become more profound, it is even more important to stay abreast of what can be done to care for the eyes in the hopes of preventing certain conditions, including cataracts.

Cataracts are the clouding of the eye's natural lenses. The World Health Organization estimates that cataracts affect more than 94 million people globally. Cataracts also account for nearly 45 percent of all blindness cases.

Even though cataracts are considered an unavoidable part of the aging process, some people wonder if they can be prevented. Reedsburg Area Medical Center says that, while one cannot entirely stop the biological aging of the lens, delayed onset and reduced severity of cataracts is possible through targeted lifestyle choices.

According to EyeHealth Northwest, by age 80, more than 90 percent of adults will either have a cataract or have already undergone surgery for them. Technically cataracts cannot be prevented, but these steps can help push cataract development further into later life.

- **Wear sunglasses with UV protection.** The consensus among experts is that prolonged exposure to ultraviolet B rays accelerates the breakdown of lens proteins. Consistent use of sunglasses that offer 100 percent UV protection can greatly slow this protein degradation. Wrap-around frames will block light from the periphery as well as the front.

- **Lower oxidative stress.** Preventing oxidative stress, a primary driver of lens opacification, can be achieved through diets rich in antioxidants, says Premier Eye Care of Eastern Idaho. Lutein, zeaxanthin and vitamin C act as shields for the eye. Eye Physicians of Long Beach says the risk of age-related cataracts reduces by around 26 percent for every additional 10 mg of carotenoids added to a person's diet.

- **Manage diabetes.** The National Institutes of Health says individuals with diabetes face a 63 percent higher likelihood of requiring cataract surgery compared to those without the condition. Managing high blood sugar will prevent sorbitol from depositing in the lenses and causing cloudiness earlier in life.

- **Quit smoking:** Smoking is a key factor in cataract development, says Optometrists.org. Smokers have a 1.66 times greater risk of developing cataracts than non-smokers because the toxins in tobacco smoke can deplete the body's natural antioxidant stores.

Although it may not be possible to turn off aging and prevent cataracts entirely, cataracts can be delayed and made less impactful through lifestyle changes.

Common Migraine Triggers

More than a billion people across the globe experience and live with migraine headaches. The National Institutes of Health says 14 percent of the population experiences migraines, and that number includes 40 million people in America alone.

People who regularly experience migraines know that an attack is rarely just a headache. A migraine is a complicated neurological event that often features a host of symptoms that may vary depending on the person. Recent data from the Global Burden of Disease study confirms that migraines remain the leading cause of disability among neurological disorders.



The Migraine Science Collaborative says research has moved from viewing migraine triggers as isolated events and instead focuses on the several small factors that may stack up until a migraine sets in. Recognizing what can lead to an attack may help people get faster relief.

- **Gender:** SingleCare says women are three times more likely to suffer migraines than men. While gender isn't a trigger, it is a risk factor for women.

- **Stress:** Pfizer says more than 70 percent of migraine sufferers cite stress as a major trigger for migraine. Often the cooling off period after a stressful event is when the attack strikes.

- **Hormones:** Wild shifts in the female hormones estrogen and progesterone, particularly during menstruation and perimenopause, account for a significant percentage of migraine attacks, says Alloy Health. Many women may find significant relief once they reach post-menopause and their hormones stabilize.

- **Weather:** An upward trend in migraine severity is linked to extreme heat and rapid barometric pressure changes, suggests National Geographic.

- **Surprisal score:** A surprisal score is a measure of how much daily experiences deviate from a person's typical routine, according to the JAMA Network. Those with a higher surprisal score may find an increased, short-term migraine risk. For example, drinking a glass of wine per day may not impact migraine, but having several drinks in a day may cause a rise in migraine odds within a certain period afterward.

- **Sleep disturbances:** Pfizer says too little sleep and too much can disrupt the brain's homeostatic balance and contribute to a migraine.

- **Foods and beverages:** Food and beverage-related triggers are subjective. But foods and beverages like aged cheeses, processed meats, red wine, artificial sweeteners, MSG, and caffeine may trigger a migraine, indicates Geisinger Health.

Migraines are unpleasant, but people may be able to reduce their frequency by recognizing potential triggers, tracking them, and making certain lifestyle changes.

What Men Should Learn About Heart Disease



Heart disease has remained the leading cause of death for men in the United States for the last century. It's also the second leading cause of death among men in Canada. Despite significant medical breakthroughs in recent years, the American Heart Association 2026 Statistical Update reveals approximately 54 percent of adult males currently live with some form of cardiovascular disease (CVD).

High burden for men

The overall burden for CVD remains high. CVD claims the lives of more than 350,000 men annually, says Kirby Medical Center. Men need to know about heart health so they can take proactive steps to protect themselves against CVD. One thing to realize is that a man's risk begins to climb sharply around age 35, according to Northwestern University. On average, men develop coronary heart disease a full decade earlier than women. Many men miss the window to catch rising blood pressure or cholesterol that can lead to future damage.

Recognizing symptoms

Men are more likely to experience the textbook symptoms of a heart attack than women. Still, these symptoms may be ignored. Here are some key signs, courtesy of Brown University Health.

- **Intense chest pain:** A crushing pain, often described as an elephant sitting on the chest.

- **Radiating pain:** Discomfort may move to the left arm, jaw or neck.

- **Shortness of breath:** Difficulty breathing, even while resting.

Prevention strategies

The AHA says up to 80 percent of heart disease cases are preventable with some simple lifestyle adjustments. Clinical focus has shifted toward the following advice.

- **Reduce noise exposure.** Reducing exposure to high levels of transportation and industrial noise can help, as noise is linked to chronic hypertension, according to Labcorp.

- **Avoid sleep extremes.** It's important to get between seven and eight hours of sleep each night. Less than five hours or more than 10 hours is directly linked to higher coronary event risks, says UChicago Medicine.

- **Manage CKM syndrome.** The AMA says CKM syndrome is a systemic disorder defined by an interconnection between obesity, diabetes, kidney disease, and heart disease. Left untreated, it can progress to organ failure, heart attack or stroke.

Early screening for CVD is advised for men so they can head off potential heart problems.

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