

**Eye Health Statistics at a Glance**  
**Compiled by American Academy of Ophthalmology**  
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**EYE DISEASES**

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have cataracts?**

A: Cataracts affect nearly 22 million Americans age 40 and older. By age 80, more than half of all Americans have cataracts. Direct medical costs for cataract treatment are estimated at \$6.8 billion annually. *[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S., by the National Eye Institute and Prevent Blindness America, 2008]*

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have glaucoma?**

A: Glaucoma affects more than 2.3 million Americans age 40 and older. Another 2 million do not know they have the disease. *[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S., by the National Eye Institute and Prevent Blindness America, 2008]*

*Additional statistics for glaucoma:*

- Glaucoma Research Foundation, [www.glaucoma.org](http://www.glaucoma.org).

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have age-related macular degeneration (AMD)?**

A: More than 2 million Americans age 50 and older have advanced AMD, the stage that can lead to severe vision impairment. *[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S., by the National Eye Institute and Prevent Blindness America, 2008]*

A: About 10 million have early, intermediate or advanced AMD. *[Source: American Academy of Ophthalmology Preferred Practice Pattern 2008, Retina/ Vitreous.]*

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have diabetic retinopathy?**

A: Diabetic retinopathy affects more than 4.4 million Americans age 40 and older. *[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S., by the National Eye Institute and Prevent Blindness America, 2008]*

The number of people, especially young people, with diabetes is increasing: 19 million Americans age 20 and older have diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetes; about one-third are unaware they have the disease. *[Source: American Academy of Ophthalmology Preferred Practice Pattern 2008, Retina/ Vitreous.]* Generally, the longer a person has diabetes the more likely they are to develop retinopathy.

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have dry eye?**

A: About 4.3 million people, with prevalence highest in those older than age 65. [Source: *American Academy of Ophthalmology Preferred Practice Pattern 2008, Cornea/External Disease.*]

**Q: How many corneal transplants are performed in the U.S. annually for Fuchs' dystrophy, corneal edema, keratoconus and other disorders?**

A: A total of 41,652 corneal transplants were performed in the U.S. in 2008. [Source: *Eye Bank Association of America 2008 Statistical Report*  
[http://www.restoresight.org/pdfs/2008pressrelease\\_statreport.pdf](http://www.restoresight.org/pdfs/2008pressrelease_statreport.pdf) ]

## **VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AND BLINDNESS**

**Q: How many people in the U.S. are visually impaired?**

A: Among people age 40 and older, more than 3.6 million are visually impaired, defined as 20/40 or worse in the best-seeing eye even when vision is corrected by eyeglasses or contact lenses. [Source: *Vision Problems in the U.S. report, by the National Eye Institute and Prevent Blindness America, 2008*]

**Q: How many people in the U.S. are legally blind?**

A: More than one million people, age 40 and older are legally blind, defined as 20/200 best corrected vision. [Source: *Vision Problems in the U.S., by the National Eye Institute and Prevent Blindness America, 2008*]

**Q: How many people in the U.S. are color blind?**

A: About 8 percent of men and 0.5 percent of women are color blind. [Source: *National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS),* [http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2008/Jul/pdf/07\\_0077.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2008/Jul/pdf/07_0077.pdf) ]

## **EYE INJURY STATISTICS**

**Q: How many people in the U.S. suffer eye injuries each year?**

A: Each year more than 2.5 million eye injuries occur and 50,000 people permanently lose part or all of their vision. Ninety percent (90%) of all eye injuries can be prevented by using protective eyewear. [Source: *United States Eye Injury Registry summary report, 1998-2002*]

**Q: Who is most likely to be injured?**

A: Nearly half (47.6 percent) of all eye injuries occur in people 18 to 45 years of age.

A: Males are at greater risk in all age groups: 73 percent of eye injuries occur in males. *[Source: United States Eye Injury Registry summary report, 1998-2002]*

**Q: Where do most injuries occur?**

A: Nearly half (44.1 percent) happen in the home.

A: 14.7 percent of eye injuries occur during sports; among children age 5 to 14, this is the most common form of eye injury. Most could be prevented through use of appropriate protective eyewear. *[Source: United States Eye Injury Registry summary report, 1998-2002]*

**PREVALENCE OF REFRACTIVE ERROR IN THE U.S.**

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have myopia (nearsightedness) ( $\geq 1.0$  diopters)?**

A: More than 32 million Americans age 40 and older are myopic.

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have hyperopia (farsightedness) ( $\geq 3.0$  diopters)?**

A: More than 12 million Americans age 40 and older are hyperopic.

**Q: What about astigmatism?**

A: This common refractive error occurs in about one in three people and may occur in combination with near or farsightedness. It causes blurry vision and is due to the cornea being less than perfectly rounded.

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have presbyopia?**

A: Everyone develops presbyopia between ages 45-50, when the eye's lens becomes less flexible.

*[Source for Refractive Error section: Vision Problems in the U.S., by the National Eye Institute and Prevent Blindness America, 2008]*

**VISION CORRECTION STATISTICS**

**Q: How many Americans need some type of corrective eyewear?**

A: More than 150 million Americans use corrective eyewear to compensate for their refractive error. Americans spend more than \$15 billion each year on eyewear. *[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S., by the National Eye Institute and Prevent Blindness America, 2008]*

**Q: How many people wear contact lenses in the U.S.?**

A: More than 38 million Americans wear contact lenses. [Source: Spectrum Consulting, 2004]

**Q: How many refractive/LASIK surgeries are performed annually in the U.S.?**

A: Approximately 700,000 LASIK procedures are performed annually. [Source: Eye Surgery Education Council, established by the American Society for Cataract and Refractive Surgery. Lasik. <http://www.eyesurgeryeducation.com/Lasik.html> ]

## **STATISTICS ON OPHTHALMOLOGISTS**

**Q: How many ophthalmologists are there in the U.S.?**

A: According to the AMA Physician Masterfile (updated July 7, 2008), there are 23,861 ophthalmologists in the U.S. That number includes both active and inactive (retired, etc.) ophthalmologists.

**Q: How many ophthalmologists are there worldwide (including the U.S.)?**

A: There are approximately 150,000 ophthalmologists worldwide, according to the Academy's International Division (2009.)

**Q: Where can I get more career information on ophthalmology?**

A: Envision Ophthalmology [ <http://www.aao.org/aao/careers/envision/index.cfm> ]