**News Release**

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**Ophthalmologists Encourage Making Your Eyes Part of a Healthy Aging Strategy**

 [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] *and the American Academy of Ophthalmology urge people to protect their health and visioin*

<INSERT CITY, STATE>– [INSERT DATE] — According to a national survey released by the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](http://www.aao.org/), nearly two out of three American adults report having eye or vision problems. A significant percentage of them, however, fail to seek medical attention in the form of regular, sight-saving eye exams. In observance of Healthy Aging Month in September, [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] joins the American Academy of Ophthalmology in emphasizing the importance of having regular eye exams to maintain healthy eyes and vision.

Some of the more common age-related eye diseases include [age-related macular degeneration](http://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/amd-macular-degeneration), [cataract](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-are-cataracts), [diabetic retinopathy](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-diabetic-retinopathy) and [glaucoma](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-glaucoma). Early detection and treatment of these conditions can help to save sight before vision loss occurs. Ophthalmologists – the physicians that specialize in medical and surgical eye care – recommend a [dilated comprehensive eye exam](http://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/eye-exams-101) as the best way to prevent these conditions from becoming debilitating.

**U.S. Adults Do Not Get Eye Exams as Often as Recommended**The survey results emphasize a need for more education about the importance of medical eye exams. Findings showed that 64 percent of adults had at least one or more of the following issues with their eyes or vision:

* difficulty seeing at night;
* blurry vision;
* reading up close;
* flashes of light;
* red, watery eyes; and,
* double vision.

Despite experiencing some level of impairment, only 13 percent admitted they had been seen by an ophthalmologist.

**How Often Do Adults Need Eye Exams?**The Academy recommends that a healthy adult get a baseline eye exam at age 40, even if they have no history of eye problems or eye disease. Those who have chronic conditions, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, may require more frequent exams.

Those over age 65 who may be concerned about cost or lack of health insurance, the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s [EyeCare America](http://www.eyecareamerica.org) program offers eligible seniors a comprehensive eye exam and up to one year of treatment at no out-of-pocket cost.

[INSERT YOUR SPOKESPERSON’S QUOTE HERE]

**About the Survey**

The survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of American Academy of Ophthalmology Feb. 1-3, 2016 among 2,048 adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact media@aao.org.

To learn more ways to keep your eyes healthy, visit the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s [EyeSmart](https://www.aao.org/eye-health)® website.

**About the American Academy of Ophthalmology**

The American Academy of Ophthalmology is the world’s largest association of eye physicians and surgeons. A global community of 32,000 medical doctors, we protect sight and empower lives by setting the standards for ophthalmic education and advocating for our patients and the public. We innovate to advance our profession and to ensure the delivery of the highest-quality eye care. Our EyeSmart® program provides the public with the most trusted information about eye health. For more information, visit [aao.org](http://www.aao.org/).

**About EyeCare America**

EyeCare America, one of the country’s leading public service programs provides eye care through a pool of nearly 6,000 volunteer ophthalmologists. Since 1985, EyeCare America has helped more than 1.8 million people. Ninety percent of the care provided is at no out-of-pocket cost to the patient. For more information, visit [eyecareamerica.org](http://www.eyecareamerica.org).

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