

5 Major Causes of Vision Loss



Age-related macular degeneration



Glaucoma



Cataract



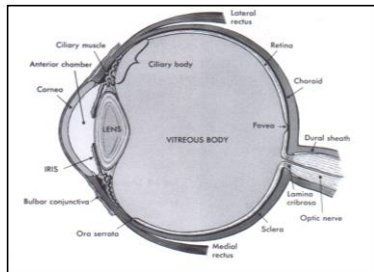
Diabetic Retinopathy



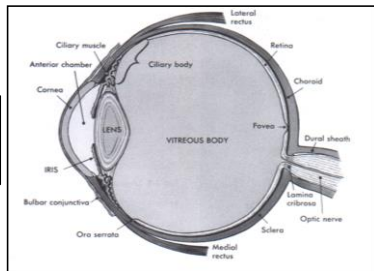
Stroke

Source: National Eye Institute

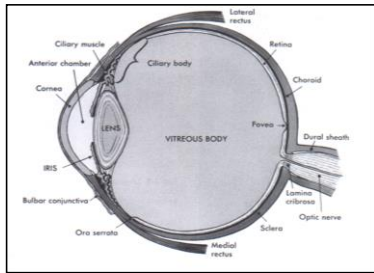
Age-Related Macular Degeneration



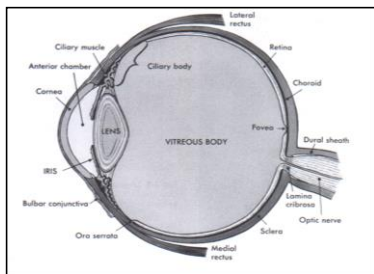
Glaucoma



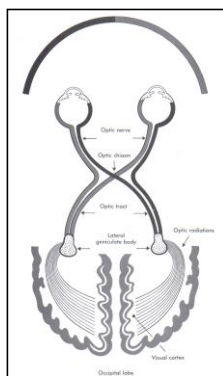
Cataracts



Diabetic Retinopathy



Stroke



Aging and Vision Loss

By 2030, the number of people over the age of 65 will double to 71.5 million, or 20% of the population. Over 65, the risk of low vision and blindness increases.

Vision loss can adversely impact the overall health and well-being of older adults in many ways:

- Increased risk of falls and fractures
- Increased risk of depression
- Difficulty identifying medications
- Difficulty bathing, dressing, and walking around the house

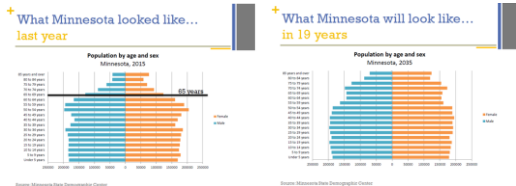
(Source: American Foundation for the Blind)

Percentage of Americans with Vision Loss by Age

Age	Percentage of Americans with Vision Loss
18-44 years	5.50%
45-64 years	12.00%
65-74 years	12.20%
75 years and over	15.20%

Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Aging Population in Minnesota



Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

What is vision rehabilitation?

A wide range of professional training and support that can restore functioning after vision loss, just as physical therapy restores function after a stroke or other injury.

Source: VisionAware (American Foundation for the Blind)

What is vision rehabilitation?

Adaptive devices such as magnifiers and **assistive technology**

Orientation and mobility training, to travel independently and safely in the home and community

Independent living skills, to confidently perform daily activities

Source: VisionAware (American Foundation for the Blind)

Orientation and Mobility



White cane travel



Navigating public spaces and transit

Technology



Personalized training on devices



Smartphones with voiceover commands



Tablets and computers with screen readers and/or magnification

Tasks of Daily Living



Tactile markers on appliances



Measuring and other cooking skills



Clothing care and mending



Knife skills and other safety tips

Community Center



Social and leisure opportunities



Knitting and other crafts



Field trips and cultural experiences



Book clubs and educational presentations

Why is vision rehabilitation important?

Vision loss is linked to

- increased dependence on others to perform daily activities
- decreased participation in social activities
- higher rates of depression: Among older people with vision impairment, 57.2% are at risk of mild or moderate depression compared to 43.5% of those without vision loss (Source: Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, AFB Press 2006, Vol. 100)
- other undesirable health outcomes

Source: Centers for Disease Control

How to tell that someone may be experiencing vision loss

1. Bumping into objects
2. Moving hesitantly or walking close to the wall, with hand extended
3. Groping for objects or touching them in an uncertain way
4. Squinting or tilting one’s head to see
5. Requesting additional or different kinds of lighting

How to tell that someone may be experiencing vision loss

6. Holding books or reading materials close to the face
7. Spilling liquids or pushing food off of a plate at mealtimes
8. Showing difficulty in recognizing faces
9. Becoming withdrawn and/or hesitant to leave the house or known surroundings
10. Lack of eye contact when speaking or being spoken to, seems to be staring into space

Questions to ask if you think your client has low vision

- Are they having trouble seeing like they used to?
- Do they have macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy or glaucoma?
- When did they last see their general practitioner or eye doctor?
- Does their vision seem to have gotten worse over the last 2-3 years?
- Can they see newsprint, a bill or a book, or watch TV easily?

Questions to ask if you think your client has low vision

- Do they feel like they put things down and lose them?
- Does it seem as if there is not enough light to see?
- Does glare bother their eyes? Both indoors and outdoors?
- Is more light helpful to see things, but too much light makes it worse?

Vision Loss Resources

Serving the 9-county metro area

Services include:

- In-home assessment and personalized training
- Rehabilitation training
- Community Center for social and recreational activities
- Support groups
- Volunteer program
- Peer mentors
- Referrals to other resources

For more information, call 612-871-2222
www.visionlossresources.org

Lighthouse Center for Vision Loss

Serving Duluth and Northern Minnesota

Services include:

- Small group training for seniors and working-age adults in daily living skills, technology, and travel
- Employment training, support, and accommodations

For more information, call 218-624-4828 or visit www.lcfvl.org/

State Services for the Blind Senior Services Unit

Serving the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota

Services include:

- Low vision aids and other adaptive devices
- Training in daily living skills, technology, and travel
- Access to books and Radio Talking Book
- Employment training, support, and accommodations

For more information, call 651-539-2300

Resources and research

An introduction to the prevalence of vision loss in the aging population: "Visual impairment, blindness cases in U.S. expected to double by 2050." National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health. May 19, 2016. www.nei.nih.gov/news/pressrelease/visual_impairment_cases_2050

Practical resources about age-related vision loss, for seniors and caregivers: <http://www.visionaware.org/info/for-seniors/>

A study of vision rehabilitation: Burton AE, Gibson JM, Shaw RL. "How do older people with sight loss manage their general health? A qualitative study." *Disability and Rehabilitation* 2016 Nov 38 (23): 2277-85. Summary: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26766138>

A compilation of many data and statistics from a variety of scholarly sources: Alliance for Aging Research. *The Silver Book: Vision Loss Volume II*, 2012. http://www.silverbook.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/The-Silver-Book_Vision-Loss_Volume-II.pdf

Contact me

Kate Grathwol
kate@vlrw.org
612-843-3411



www.VisionLossResources.org
