

Free Guide
Learn about sight
and how your eyes age



ageing eye guide

for serious readers



Eye Health

An insight into the most common eye conditions

Ageing Process

What happens to your eyes during the ageing process

What You Can Do

Understand how you can manage your eye health



welcome

sight matters

Highlights

- 4** **Common eye conditions**
Learn which conditions can affect your eyes and how to spot them
- 6-12** **Ageing eye timeline**
What happens to your eyes between the ages of 40-70
- 14** **What you can do**
Identify what steps you can take to combat eye conditions

Our eyes dominate our sensory perception, which is why sight accounts for 80% of our memories.

As we age, we all need to learn how to cope with the intense frustrations of ageing eyes.

This guide explains how our eyesight changes as we age. It discusses how best to combat the symptoms of common eye conditions like macular degeneration.

Everything we see is light.

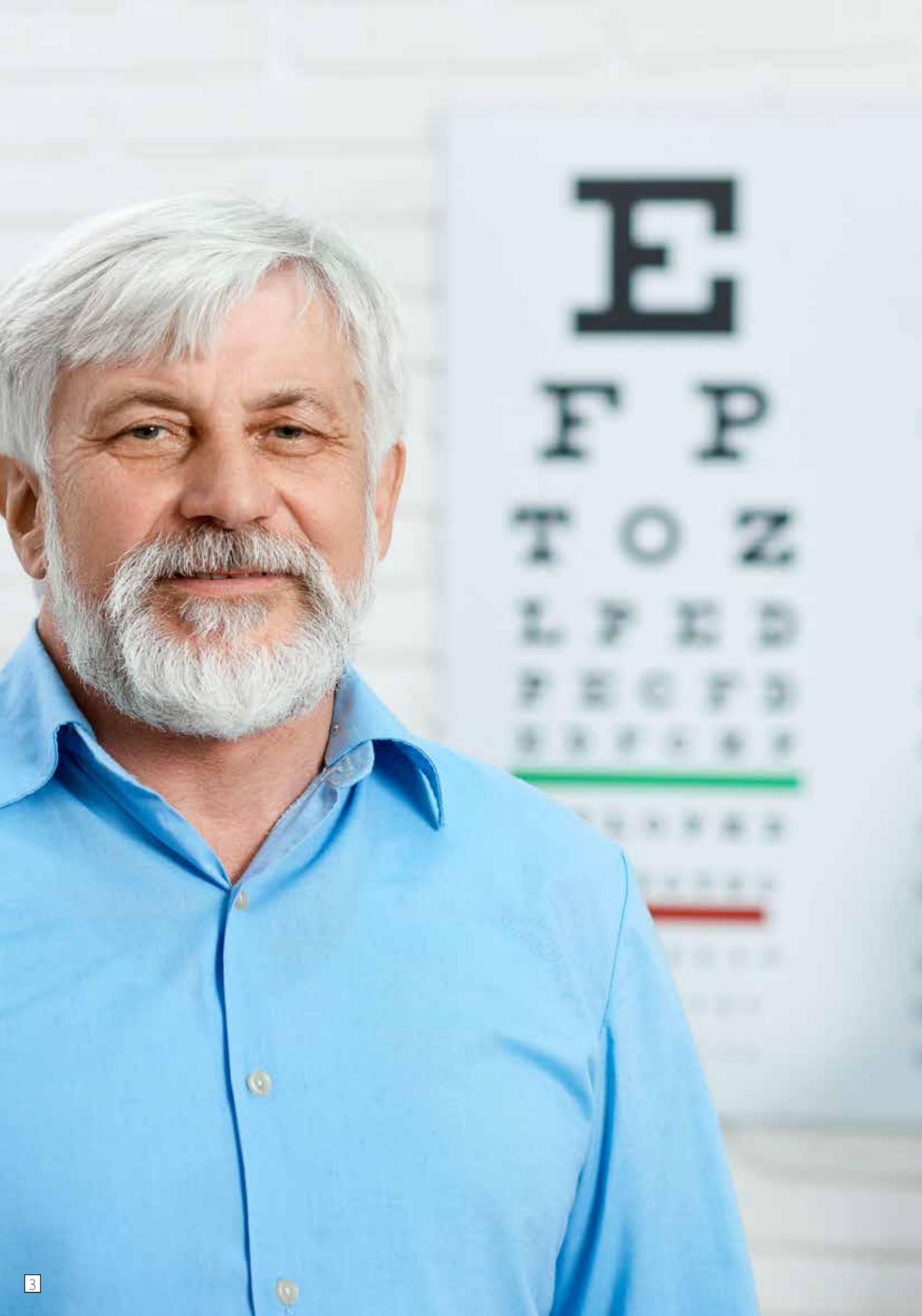
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common eye conditions

be aware of the threats to your sight

Our eyes are put through a lot during our lifetime. As such a key element to our lifestyle and general wellbeing, our eyes are fundamental. Naturally, as we age, our eyes do too and as a result, our visual acuity declines.

What conditions might our eyes develop as we go through life? We have listed a few of the most common conditions, so you know what to look out for.

Dry eye

Dry eye is a condition that occurs when tears aren't providing adequate lubrication for your eyes. This increases in likelihood as you age.

You are more at risk of dry eye if you wear contact lenses or take certain kinds of medicine.

Macular degeneration

Also known as AMD, this condition consists of the deterioration of the macula, the central area of the retina that controls visual acuity.

A gradual loss of the central vision usually occurs. Too much blue light has been shown to accelerate the condition.

Diabetic retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy is caused by high blood sugar levels damaging the retina.

Although it takes several years to develop it can cause blindness if left untreated. Often there are no symptoms in the early stages of retinopathy.

Cataracts

A cataract is developed when the eyes natural lens clouds over. Over time the cloud gets bigger and will begin to cause blurry and misty vision.

Cataracts are the most common cause of visual impairment over the age of forty.

Presbyopia

This is a natural condition that affects your ability to focus on things close to you, like a book or text on a mobile phone.

The onset of presbyopia is usually first noticed when you have to start holding reading material further away from you to make the text clearer.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma causes damage to the optic nerve, which usually happens when there is a build-up of pressure inside the eye. The optic nerve connects the eye to the brain, sending direct information between the two.

As glaucoma develops, you begin to experience a gradual loss of your peripheral vision.



beginning to decline

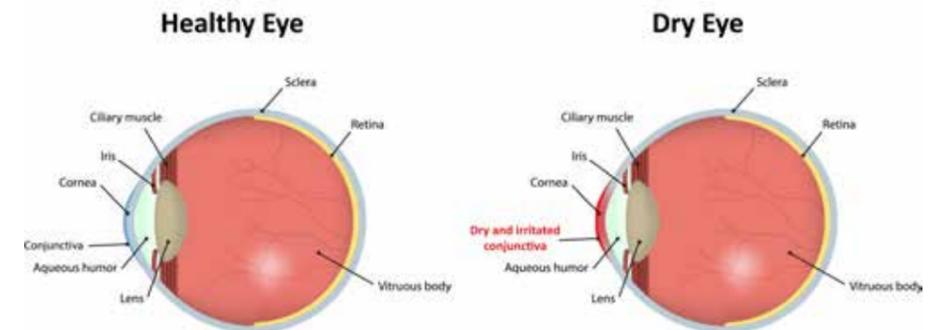
your eyes at 40

What typically happens

Once you reach the age of 40, your eyesight will begin declining gradually. The changes might not be noticeable at this stage but will start to take effect.

Signs to look out for

- There is an increased risk of dry eye at this stage in your life. Your eyes won't be able to lubricate efficiently, and you will often feel the need to rub your eyes.
- Presbyopia is normally identified in people after they reach the age of 40. Usually, one of the first symptoms is struggling to focus on objects close to you.
- Eyestrain could become a big issue at this age due to constant screen time, whether that's a digital screen at work or a mobile phone screen.
- Cataracts may begin to develop at this age but they won't usually start to impair your vision until your 60s.



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accelerated decline

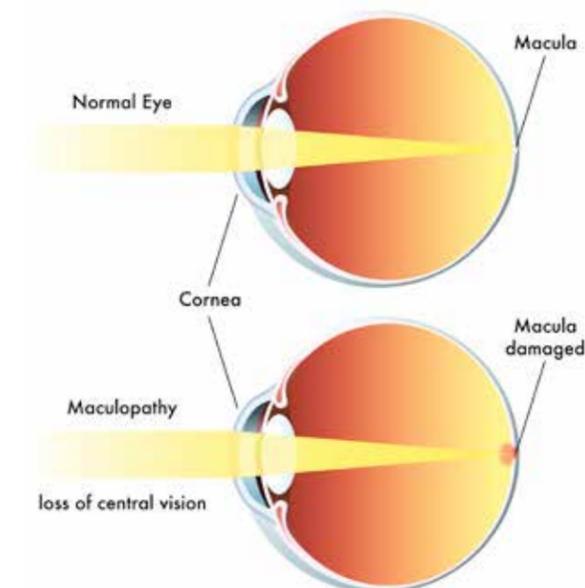
your eyes at 50

What typically happens

Once you hit the milestone that is your 50th birthday, you'll be more cognisant of the changes to your eyesight. What you experience at this stage is similar to your 40s, but conditions now develop much more quickly.

Signs to look out for

- You may experience distorted vision in the centre of your field of vision due to macular degeneration (AMD). AMD is the leading cause of vision loss in people over the age of 50.
- Seeing detail will become increasingly difficult. This will often lead people to require glasses or contact lenses at this stage if they haven't needed them already.
- The gradual loss of your peripheral vision may begin to occur, which could be a potential sign of glaucoma.
- Dry eye is an increased risk at this age. It could continue to affect you as you age due to your tear ducts functioning insufficiently.



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eye conditions developing

your eyes at 60

What typically happens

Most eye conditions will often be known or diagnosed by the time you're 60. You could be looking at different treatments to prevent the onset of further eye conditions or to reduce the speed of visual degradation.

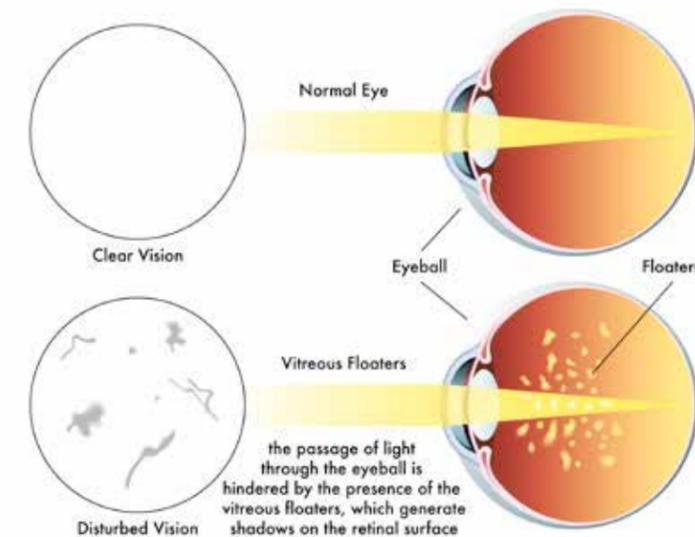
Signs to look out for

- You may notice specks or patches of red in your eye. These are new blood vessels that may grow and bleed into the centre of the eye, causing serious vision loss or blindness.
- There is a high chance that floaters will become an issue. This can be normal at this age, but in some cases can be an indication of an underlying condition like retinal detachment.

This eye condition is called diabetic retinopathy. If you have had diabetes for some of your life, then you may be at an increased risk to this condition at an elderly age.

This is a condition where the inner and outer layers of the retina become separated. Floaters will normally be noticeable in well-lit surroundings.

- If you have been driving for most of your life, this is the age where you may find difficulty driving as your vision and depth perception will have reduced significantly.
- Your ability to see in low light will also significantly reduce. Unless in clear daylight or well-lit rooms, you may struggle with your vision to some extent.



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highest risk

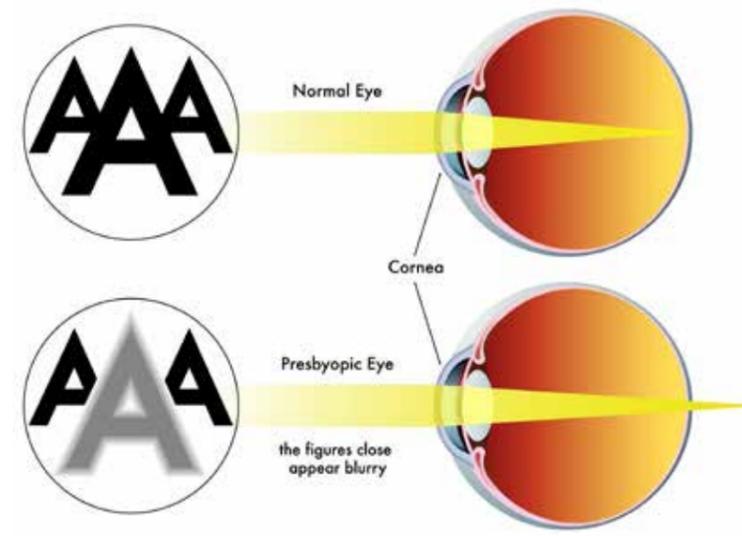
your eyes at 70+

What typically happens

This is the age where you are most likely to develop an eye condition. Most eye operations and corrections are performed when you are in this age bracket.

Signs to look out for

- You will likely lack the ability to focus on items that are close to you due to the advancement of presbyopia. You might need a visual aid to alleviate the symptoms depending on their severity.
- If you haven't developed it already, the glaucoma risk is heightened again. Every 1 in 50 white Europeans has some form of glaucoma at 70. You may experience very strong blurring in your vision and need to look for visual aids to help your eyes adjust.
- You will have even higher risks of acquiring one of the common eye conditions listed on page 4 once you hit 75. In the UK, one in five people over the age of 75 live with sight loss, and a further one in every two people at the age of 90.
- The ability to process colour in your vision will decline once you hit this age. As well as this, you will mostly only be able to see directly in front of you, due to your visual fields narrowing.



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treating your eyes

options to consider

How to help...

Macular degeneration (AMD)

- For wet AMD, regular eye injections directly into the eye reduce the decline in visual acuity. Light treatment called photodynamic therapy destroys the blood vessels that cause the condition.
- There is no treatment for dry AMD, but you can aid your condition by ensuring you have bright, natural reading lights and magnifying lenses.

Dry eye

- It is recommended that you take plenty of breaks to rest your eyes during computer use, ensure your screen is at eye level, and get plenty of sleep to alleviate the symptoms of dry eye.
- The NHS recommend you to see an optician if the symptoms persist for more than a couple of weeks of trying the remedies above.

Glaucoma

- You can't reverse vision loss that happened before your glaucoma diagnosis; however you can receive treatments that can halt the progression of the condition.
- Depending on the type of glaucoma you have, you might be advised to use eye drops or to undergo laser treatment or surgery.

Cataracts

- Surround yourself with a light that is as natural as possible. A strong, natural, dimmable reading light directed specifically on to the point of focus can improve clarity.
- Glasses in the early stages can help to improve conditions. Surgery to remove and replace the lens will become a necessity once the cataract has developed.

Presbyopia

- The simplest and safest treatment for presbyopia is getting glasses that are made specifically for your eyes.
- Some people turn to contact lenses and laser eye surgery, but both of these treatments carry a risk of complications.

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references

and further information

NHS Eye Condition Information

Overview

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>

AMD

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/age-related-macular-degeneration-amd/>

Cataracts

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cataracts/>

Glaucoma

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/glaucoma/>

Dry eye

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dry-eyes/>

Presbyopia

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/long-sightedness/>

Diabetic retinopathy

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetic-retinopathy/>

Other Eye Condition Information

Dry eye

<https://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/dryeye.htm>

Presbyopia

<https://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/presbyopia.htm>

The Ageing Eye

<https://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/good-vision-throughout-life/adult-vision-19-to-40-years-of-age/adult-vision-over-60-years-of-age>

<https://www.allaboutvision.com/en-gb/over60/vision-warning-signs/>

<https://www.bausch.com/vision-and-age/40s-and-50s-eyes/eye-concerns>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/healthy-aging/in-depth/aging/art-20046070>

<https://www.allaboutvision.com/en-gb/over60/vision-changes/>