



Ten Warning Signs of Age-Related Eye Problems



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ALL ABOUT EYES

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Regular eye exams are the very best way to avoid vision problems as you grow older.

But being aware of certain warning signs also can help you take appropriate steps to maintain your eyesight, particularly if vision symptoms occur suddenly.

Eye Problems and Warning Signs

The following signs and symptoms can indicate a medical emergency. In most cases, you should see your eye doctor immediately if you experience:

1 A flood of spots and floaters in your field of vision. Usually, spots and floaters are due to a benign, age-related condition called vitreous detachment. But a

sudden onset of spots and floaters also can be caused by a serious, sight-threatening tear or detachment of the retina.

2 A sensation that a dark curtain has settled across your field of view. This could be caused by a retinal detachment, which occurs when the retina separates from the underlying layer of nourishing blood vessels (choroid).

3 Sudden eye pain, redness, nausea and vomiting. These symptoms can signal a sudden (acute) attack of narrow-angle glaucoma, which can permanently damage the eye's optic nerve.

4 A gradual (or sudden) narrowing of your field of vision, leaving you with the ability to see only directly in front of you. This could mean you have developed glaucoma that damages your optic nerve, with accompanying vision loss at the "edges" of your field of view.

5 A gradual loss of central vision, including distortions such as seeing wavy instead of straight lines. These symptoms may be caused by macular degeneration (AMD), a leading cause of blindness among older Americans. In the past, there was no effective treatment for AMD. But today, several new medical treatments can effectively halt vision loss due to macular degeneration.

6 Cloudy and blurred eyesight, "halos" around lights at night, loss of bright color vision. These vision changes may be due to cataracts. Cataracts tend to worsen gradually over time and are not a

medical emergency. Nevertheless, as your eye's natural lens continues to cloud with aging, you eventually will go blind unless you have cataract surgery that replaces your cloudy lens with a man-made intraocular lens (IOL).



7 Blind spots in your field of view, accompanied by eye floaters and unexplained blurred vision. If you have diabetes, these vision problems may be due to the onset of diabetic retinopathy. Regular eye exams are essential for diabetics, particularly if you are over age 60.

8 "Scratchy" or irritated sensation, eye surface pain, tearing. These signs and symptoms are most commonly due to dry eye syndrome. Dry eye usually is more of a nuisance than a sight-threatening condition. But symptoms can be severe, particularly as you grow

older and your body produces fewer tears or your tear chemistry changes.

9 Double vision, double images or "ghost" images. Double vision can be caused by many eye conditions. In some cases, double vision also can signal an underlying health emergency such as a stroke.

10 Sudden blurry vision in one eye. If you are over 60, your chance of developing a macular hole in the part of the retina where fine focusing occurs increases. While some vision symptoms are less urgent, sudden vision loss means you should immediately contact your eye care practitioner. Because delay can mean permanent vision loss, never hesitate to seek help.

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- Dr. Cheryl Roell has been practicing in southern NJ since obtaining her Doctorate in Optometry from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1993. She is a native of Delaware County, Pennsylvania and her undergraduate studies in Natural Science were completed at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Cheryl loves spending time with her 3 children when not at the office. She also enjoys going to the beach, baking and exercising.
- Dr. David Roell graduated from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1993 with a Doctorate in Optometry. He attended Washington and Jefferson University for his undergraduate education receiving his B.S. in Biology/Pre-Med. Dr. David is a native of Pittsburgh and a Steelers Fan. Spending time with his family, fishing and bird watching are activities he enjoys in his leisure time.
- Dr. Cheryl Roell and Dr. David Roell formed CDR Eye Associates in 1999 and opened their current location, All About Eyes, in Egg Harbor Township, in 2007.

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