

10 Tips to Help Reduce Your Risk for Cataracts

What are cataracts?

A cataract is a clouding of the normally clear lens of your eye, which makes it seem that you are viewing the world through a fogged-up window. Symptoms progress slowly and can make it difficult to read, drive or see the expression on a friend's face.

Cataracts affect more than 24.4 million Americans age 40 and older. By age 75, approximately half of all Americans have cataracts.¹

Most cataracts develop when aging or injury changes the tissue that makes up your eye's lens. Some inherited genetic disorders or underlying medical conditions can also increase your risk. Still, there are actions you can take to help reduce your chances.



Healthy clear lens



Cloudy lens with cataract



Have regular eye examinations.

This is important to help maintain your vision and the overall health of your eyes.²



Protect your eyes from injuries. Eye injuries can cause long-term damage that increases the risk of cataracts.² Wear the appropriate protective goggles and face shields when working or playing sports.



Choose a healthy diet. Fruits and vegetables have many antioxidants that help maintain healthy eyes. A diet rich in vitamins and minerals is also important. And studies have shown that omega-3 fatty acids found in oily fish like salmon and sardines, as well as flaxseed, can help reduce risk.²



Wear sunglasses. Ultraviolet light from the sun can damage eyes and may contribute to the development of cataracts.² Wear sunglasses that block ultraviolet B (UVB) rays when you're outdoors.



Control high blood pressure.²



Quit smoking or never start.²



Manage your diabetes. People with diabetes mellitus face a 60 percent greater risk of developing cataracts. Maintaining good control of your blood sugar levels will help reduce your risk.³



Prolonged use of corticosteroid medications is a risk factor for cataract development.²

Always ask your doctor about risk factors when starting a new drug regimen.



Maintain a healthy weight. Obesity is a risk factor for cataracts.²



Avoid excessive alcohol use.²

To learn more, visit [versanthealth.com](https://www.versanthealth.com)

Sources:

1. Eye Health Data and Statistics. (June 15, 2022). <https://www.nei.nih.gov/eyedata/cataract>

2. Cataracts: Symptoms and Causes. Mayo Clinic Staff. (Sep 13, 2022). Retrieved Feb. 1, 2023 from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cataracts/symptoms-causes/syc-20353790>

3. Diabetes Complications: Cataracts. (June 10, 2022). <https://www.diabetes.co.uk/diabetes-complications/cataracts.html>