



Your Eyes



TODAY

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Cat-a-What? All About Cataracts

According to Prevent Blindness, more than 22 million Americans have cataracts. A cataract is a clouding of the eye's lens, which blocks light from getting into your eye. The lens, normally transparent, helps to focus images onto your retina that transmits images to your brain, allowing you to see. When you have a cataract, your vision will become blurry or dim because it blocks light from passing in to your retina. Cataracts effect everyone – more than half of all Americans have cataracts by the time they reach 80 years of age! It may also be found in young people and newborn babies.

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**Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington®
233 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002**

(202) 234-1010 | www.youreyes.org | Facebook & Twitter: @youreyesdc

News & Updates

Cat-a-What? All About Cataracts

(Continued from page 1)

The major risk factor for cataracts is increasing age. There are several other risk factors associated with cataracts as well – long-term exposure to the sun, diabetes, inflammation of the eye, smoking, and a family history of cataracts. Cataracts do not cause pain usually. Symptoms include blurred or double vision, light sensitivity, and you may even see a milky/yellowish spot on your pupil.

If you are diagnosed with cataracts, do not worry – there is cataracts surgery! Every year in the U.S. more than two million people have their vision restored through cataracts surgery. It is one of the most common and safest operations, with 90% of people having improved vision once the cataract removed. However, surgery is only recommended when the vision loss interferes with your everyday activities like driving, reading, or watching TV.

The best way to learn if you have a cataract and qualify for surgery is to ensure you receive a regular comprehensive dilated eye exam with your eye doctor – especially if you are over 65 years of age! For more information, visit <http://nei.nih.gov/health/cataract>, or call (202) 234-1010.

News & Updates

How Will I Get There? Transportation Options for Those With Low Vision

Living with low vision has a few adaptations that you must endure. One immediate issue is getting around the city without the ability to drive. While MetroAccess is widely-recognized, below is a list of other area programs!

Transport DC: Provides \$5.00 rides within the District for MetroAccess-eligible individuals via taxi for the first 15 days of the month and for employment and medical appointments for the remainder of the month. Call (844) 322-7732 for more.

Abilities-Ride: Provides taxi rides for MetroAccess-eligible individuals beginning and ending in Maryland. Rider pays for the first \$5, Metro covers the next \$15, and rider owes any amount exceeding \$20. Call (202) 962-1100 for more.

Northern Virginia: Options for MetroAccess-eligible individuals include **Fairfax TaxiAccess** (703-877-5800), **Alexandria ParaTransit** (703-746-4084), and **Arlington STAR** (703-892-8747). Contact each agency for more.

Other Options: Ask a friend to drive you to a weekly task (ie: grocery shopping) - most won't mind lending a hand once or twice a week, and it is an opportunity to see each other! Additionally, paid rideshare services (such as Uber and Lyft) have accessible travel options.

Q&A with Dr. Weinberg

What are floaters? What do I do about them?

If you have ever seen a gray or black spot, speck, squiggly line, string, or cobweb in your vision, you have seen a floater! Floaters are caused by clumps of gel or cells in the vitreous. The vitreous is the jelly-like substance that fills at least two-thirds of eye and gives it its round shape. You are able to visualize these strings or clumps when they cast a shadow on the retina, the thin light-sensitive tissue in the back of the eye. You are more likely to see floaters when looking at a bright background such as a white wall or the sky and floaters move when your eyes move.

Floaters are more common with age as the vitreous begins to shrink and become more liquid. In most cases, floaters are merely an annoyance. (Try moving your eyes up and down or left and right to move a particularly bothersome floater out of the way!) However, occasionally floaters can be a sign of something more serious such as a retinal detachment, ocular inflammation, or a hemorrhage. If you see an increase in floaters or accompanying flashes of light, see an eye doctor right away to rule these vision-threatening conditions.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Weinberg, call **(703) 652-7803**. For more information, visit **youreyes.org**.

(Belinda Weinberg, OD, is a low vision specialist. Send questions to **communications@youreyes.org**. We regret that unpublished questions cannot be answered individually.)

MARCH 2019

**TUE
12**

What You Should Know Before Cataract Surgery

11:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. • Low Vision Support Group
Guest Speaker: Adam Pearlman, MD, Washington National Eye Center Ophthalmology Resident
Join Dr. Pearlman for an informative discussion about cataract removal, which is one of the most common surgical operations performed in the United States.

MedStar Washington Hospital Center
Eye Center Conference Room, Suite 1A-19
110 Irving Street, NW, Washington, DC
To register, call (202) 234-1010.

**WED
13**

Library Cards in Fairfax County

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. • Low Vision Support Group
Speaker: Kenneth Plummer, Fairfax County Library
Join us as we discuss Fairfax County library cards and how they also help at the Vinson Hall Library.

Vinson Hall Retirement Community
(Conference Room Near the Library)
6251 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, VA
To register, call Sandy at (703) 989-1821.

**MON
18**

**Using Your Cell Phone (and More)
with Low Vision**

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. • POB Tech Talk Mondays
Speaker: Patrick Timony, Adaptive Technology Librarian, DC Public Library

Join us for a discussion about how to make technology, such as cell phones, adaptive for people with low vision. Bring your questions (and devices)!

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To register, call (202) 234-1010.

**WED
20**

More Ways to Read Books

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. • Low Vision Support Group
Speaker: Jamie Roldan, Christine Huang, and Sandy Neuzil.

If you can no longer read normal print, join us to learn how to read books using:

1. the CCTV in the Library at The Virginian
2. Large Print books in the Library
3. Enhanced on iPad or Kindle (bring yours!)

The Virginian Retirement Community

9229 Arlington Blvd., Room 402, Fairfax, VA 22031

To register, call Sandy at (703) 989-1821.

MARCH 2019 (continued)

**THU
21**

DC Assistive Technology Program

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. • POB Signature Share Group

Guest Speaker: Alicia Johns, Assistive Technology Program and Resource Center DC (ATPDC)

Join us as Alicia showcases assistive technology devices and discusses services that help increase independence for people with all sorts of disabilities, including low vision!

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**THU
28**

Who's Who in Eye Care

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. • Vision Resource Lunch & Learn

Guest Speaker: Clete Clark, Certified Ophthalmic Technician, Washington Eye Physicians & Surgeons

Learn more about who you are listening to and who is caring for your eyes at the doctor's office!

Clete Clark will discuss the education, training, and licensing requirements for the various types of eye care professionals.

Village of Friendship Heights

4433 South Park Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD

To register, call the Village Center at (301) 656-2797.

DESCRIBED ART TOURS IN MARCH

POB is proud to partner with local museums offering art tours for visitors who are blind or have low vision.

America InSight (Smithsonian American Art Museum)
Sun., March 10 at 1:30 p.m. & Thurs., March 21 at 3:30 p.m.
For more: AmericanArtMuseumTours@si.edu or (202) 633-8550

Picture This! (National Gallery of Art)
Sat., March 23 & Wed., March 27, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
For more: access@nga.gov or (202) 842-6905

Portrait InSight (Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery)
Thurs., March 21, 2:00 p.m. & Sat., March 23, 12:00 p.m.
For more: NPGAccess@si.edu or (202) 633-8506

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FREE MATTER
For the Blind or
Handicapped