



February is Age-Related Macular Degeneration Awareness Month

February is Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) Awareness Month, sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology. AMD is the world's leading cause of irreversible blindness in people over 50, affecting over two million Americans and 20,000 people in our region!

AMD affects the macula at the back of your eye, the part of the retina that lets you see fine detail, like images directly in front of you or words on a page.

There are two forms of AMD:

- In **Dry AMD**, yellow-colored fatty deposits called "drusen" build up in the cells of the macula. Your eye doctor can detect these during an eye exam.
- In **Wet AMD**, abnormal blood vessels can suddenly leak fluid in the back of your eye without notice. About 10-15% of people with dry AMD progress to wet AMD.

(Continued on page 2)

Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington®
415 2nd Street NE, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20002

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

News & Updates

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Some effective treatment options are available for Wet AMD. Often, your doctor will use eye injections (called anti-VEGF agents) to help shrink or slow the growth of these abnormal blood vessels. While "eye injections" may sound scary, they are much better than the alternative! Other treatments include thermal laser treatment and photodynamic therapy.

With dry AMD, the focus is on reducing risks and the importance of early detection. Preventative measures include healthy lifestyle choices, like not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, eating green leafy vegetables, fish, and regular exercise.

Prevention can also involve taking vitamins recommended by your eye doctor. Always speak to your doctor before making any changes to your lifestyle.

To learn more about AMD monitoring and management options, speak to your eye doctor. For more information about AMD, visit www.eyesmart.org.

Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY 2023

**THU
2**

Glaucoma 101

7 p.m. – 8 p.m. • Love Your Eyes Event

Join F. Strother Ashburn III, M.D., Eye Associates of Washington DC, for an interactive webinar about the signs and symptoms of glaucoma, available treatment options, and what you need to know to prevent unnecessary vision loss.

**TUE
7**

Dry vs. Wet Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

12 p.m. – 1 p.m. • Love Your Eyes Event

Join Mariam Mathai, M.D., Retina Group of Washington, for an overview of AMD, the differences between dry and wet AMD, and what you need to know to prevent unnecessary vision loss.

**SAT
11**

Glaucoma Workshop

1 p.m. – 2 p.m. • Love Your Eyes Event

Already have glaucoma? Join a doctor and learn how to save money and make your expensive glaucoma drops last longer. Attendees will receive a FREE nanodropper (while supplies last).

St. Joseph Catholic Church

711 North Columbus Street, Alexandria, VA

FEBRUARY 2023 (continued)

To register for an event, call (301) 951-4444
at least 24 hours prior to the event.

**TUE
14**

Low Vision Awareness Month

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. • Low Vision Support Group
Join Abhishek Naidu, M.D., Washington National
Eye Center Ophthalmology Resident, to learn about
available services and resources to help maintain
your independence with low vision.

Hosted by Washington National Eye Center.

**TUE
14**

Low Vision vs. No Vision – What's Different?

6 p.m. – 7 p.m. • Stargardt's Network Happy Hour
How can we better understand one another
regarding our sight challenges? All are welcome.
Bring your favorite drink and join us!

Hosted by the Prevention of Blindness Society.

**WED
15**

Diabetes and Eye Health Nutrition

Low Vision Town Hall Meeting

11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. • Special Event

Join Reginald Barnes, M.D., MedStar Washington
Hospital Center, to learn how eating a diet rich in
fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can help not
only your heart but also your eyes!

Call (301) 951-4444 to receive Zoom joining
information – via computer or phone!

FEBRUARY 2023 (continued)

To register for an event, call (301) 951-4444
at least 24 hours prior to the event.

**FRI
17**

Metropolitan Washington Ear (MWE)

1 p.m. – 2 p.m. • Beatley Low Vision Support Group
Join Neely Oplinger from MWE to learn about
services for blind and visually impaired people who
cannot effectively read print.

To RSVP, call (301) 951-4444.

Charles E. Beatley Central Library
5005 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA

**TUE
21**

Learn About OrCam

1 p.m. – 2 p.m. • Tech Talk Tuesdays

Join Stacey Crown from OrCam as she demonstrates
how OrCam's artificial intelligence products can help
empower people and enrich their daily experiences.

**THU
23**

Lighting and Contrast

12 p.m. – 1 p.m. • Vision Resource Group

Proper lighting and contrast are among the most
powerful tools to optimize remaining sight. Learn
why and ways to make your spaces the best for you.
To RSVP, call (301) 656-2797.

Friendship Heights Village Center
4433 South Park Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD

News & Updates

Love Your Eyes

This February, the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington is hosting special eye health events and an online silent auction to encourage you to **love your eyes!**

Learn more about these events on pages 3, 4, and 5, or visit www.loveyoureyesdmv.org.

Some vision changes are normal as we age, but vision loss and blindness are not. Eye diseases are common and can go unnoticed for a long time – some have no symptoms at first.

A comprehensive dilated eye exam by an eye doctor is one great way to love your eyes and is necessary to find eye diseases in the early stages when treatment is most effective.

Other steps to love your eyes include taking your medications, reaching and maintaining a healthy weight, adding physical activity to your daily routine, and kicking the smoking habit. If you have diabetes, you can love your eyes by controlling your A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.

For more information, visit www.loveyoureyesdmv.org or call (202) 234-1010, ext. 233.

Living with Low Vision

"Black Water"

By Tara Aziz

Different cultures have different names and terms for everything. For instance, the culture I come from refers to kerosene as black gold, calls glaucoma black water, and cataracts white water. When my doctor informed me that I had "black water," I was unsure what he meant.

After learning about glaucoma, my first instincts were shock, anger, and loss. I was frantic to find a way to learn Braille. To me, the way I knew the world was quickly coming to an end. It took some time to accept my new reality.

I don't think I will ever be ready for when my vision gets worse, and I am sure many readers can relate to this too. But I try to prepare in case it does. While I still have yet to learn Braille, I use audio options. I cook and bake with minimal use of my vision and keep myself busy with hobbies I enjoy. I also take the chance to enjoy the vision I still have.

I love my eyes, and if "black water" takes more of my vision, I will still love them. There is so much I can still do, even with my sight loss!

Call the POB Low Vision Resource and Information Hotline at (301) 951-4444 to speak with a Resource Navigator.

Register for POB READS

February is Library Lover's Month! Join **POB READS** – a book club for all with vision challenges! This group is not intensive; we encourage reading and socializing!

POB READS meets virtually on the first Friday of every other month at 11 a.m. The next meeting is on Friday, March 3, at 11 a.m. The next book is "Run, Rose, Run" by Dolly Parton and James Patterson.

All books are available for free through the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, also known as the Talking Books Program.

To sign up, visit pobreads.org or call (301) 951-4444.

To also start receiving the digital edition of this newsletter, please send an email to communications@youreyes.org.

FREE MATTER
For the Blind or
Handicapped

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