



# Your Eyes



**JUNE 2023**

**TODAY**

## **Nystagmus Awareness**

June 20 is **International Nystagmus Awareness Day**, a time to raise awareness about this eye condition impacting nearly 800,000 Americans. But just what is nystagmus?

Nystagmus is an involuntary, repetitive eye movement that usually results in some degree of visual loss and may be associated with other, more serious conditions that limit vision. The degree and direction of eye movement, visual loss, and resulting impairment vary significantly.

Nystagmus can occur in infancy and adulthood. Thousands of adults develop nystagmus annually due to other medical conditions such as strokes and multiple sclerosis.

This condition can lead to:

- Sensitivity to light
- Vision problems
- Dizziness or feeling like the world is 'wiggling'
- Difficulty seeing in the dark

(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](http://youreyes.org) | Facebook & Instagram: @youreyesdc**

# **Nystagmus Awareness**

---

(Continued from page 1)

**Nystagmus can be caused by:**

- **Family history of nystagmus**
- **Various eye conditions in children (cataracts, etc.)**
- **Albinism**
- **Inner ear problems**
- **Multiple sclerosis, stroke, or head injury**
- **Certain medications (lithium, anti-seizure medications)**
- **Alcohol or drug abuse**

**Nystagmus may or may not be treatable. There is no cure for the congenital nystagmus. However, glasses or contacts can improve symptoms. Sometimes surgery of eye muscles moving the eyes is possible, but this only improves symptoms. If developed over time, it could go away if the condition causing nystagmus is resolved.**

**The Nystagmus Network ([www.nystagmusnetwork.org](http://www.nystagmusnetwork.org)) is an online hub providing information and support to everyone living with Nystagmus, their families and the people who support them. Additionally, resources, aids, and services are available for people through POB's Low Vision Resource and Support Network and Low Vision Resource Centers.**

**Speak to your doctor for more information. Call the POB Low Vision Resource and Information Hotline at (301) 951-4444 to speak with a Resource Navigator.**

# News and Updates

## Make an Appointment at POB's Low Vision Resource Center

---

At the Prevention of Blindness Society Low Vision Resource Centers, trained resource navigators, who have first-hand knowledge of available resources, services, and technologies, can meet with you one-on-one. The Centers also house helpful technology, from high-tech wearables and video magnifiers to bump dots and writing guides to support you.

The Center is an excellent resource for asking questions and trying things out before purchasing. We welcome you to join us and learn what is best for you.

### Our Locations:

**105 South Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314**

(Appointments available on Mondays)

**4948 St. Elmo Avenue, Suite 209, Bethesda, MD 20814**

(Appointments available on Thursdays and Fridays)

All in-person visits are by appointment only.

Call the POB Low Vision Resource and Information Hotline at **(301) 951-4444** to speak with a Resource Navigator and make a free appointment in Alexandria, VA, or Bethesda, MD.

# Calendar of Events

**JUNE 2023**

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

**TUE  
13**

## **Age-Related Macular Degeneration**

**11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. • Low Vision Support Group**  
Join **Mazin Elsarrag, M.D., Washington National Eye Center Ophthalmology Resident**, to learn about age-related macular degeneration, how it can affect your vision, and what you can do.  
Hosted by **Washington National Eye Center**.

---

**WED  
14**

## **The Eye-Heart Connection**

**1 p.m. – 2 p.m. • Leisure World Lions Support Group**  
Join **Joseph Mekhail, M.D., Washington Eye Institute**, to learn about the vital connection between your eyes and heart. You've probably heard that the eyes are the window to your soul. However, they are also the window to the health of your heart. Learn how changes in the eye may show signs of coronary artery disease, stroke, and other serious health conditions.  
To RSVP, call (301) 951-4444.  
**Leisure World Clubhouse II – Edmondson Room**  
**3300 N. Leisure World Blvd., Silver Spring, MD 20906**

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

**TUE  
20**

## **Lighting 101**

**1 p.m. – 2 p.m. • Tech Talk Tuesdays**

Proper lighting is one of the most impactful tools in our toolkit to optimize sight. However, what type of lighting? And how can I set my workspace for success? Join us as we discuss and share some different lighting options.

---



## **Your Eyes Today will return in September!**

Listen and watch replays of recent webinars and events, including POB Low Vision Town Hall events and Tech Talk events, at:

**[www.youreyes.org/replays](http://www.youreyes.org/replays)**

You can also use an Amazon Alexa-enabled device to listen to event replays with just your voice.

**Say: "Alexa, play Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington podcast." Try it!**

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

# Living with Low Vision

## Chatting with Artificial Intelligence

---

By Tara Aziz

**Last month, I wrote about the growth of artificial intelligence (AI) and how it impacts those with low vision. I asked ChatGPT, a special AI-based program that can have conversations with people, to answer a few questions!**

**I asked ChatGPT: "How can a person with low vision read the newspaper?" Here is its answer:**

**"For a person with low vision, reading the newspaper can be a challenging task. However, there are several ways to make reading the newspaper easier:**

**Use a magnifying glass:** A magnifying glass can help enlarge the text, making it easier to read. There are also electronic magnifiers that can be used for this purpose.

**Increase font size:** Most newspapers now offer a digital version, where you can increase the font size.

**Use a screen reader:** Screen readers can read out loud the text on the screen. There are several screen readers available, such as JAWS, NVDA, and VoiceOver.

**Use a CCTV:** Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTVs) are specialized cameras that enlarge and display text on a screen. They are available in portable and desktop versions."

**Then, I asked ChatGPT: "What is available to help me hear the news?" Here is its answer:**

**"There are several audio versions available for newspapers, which can be helpful for individuals with low vision. Some of the common audio versions of newspapers include:**

**Text-to-speech:** Many newspapers offer a text-to-speech feature that reads the articles aloud. This feature can be accessed through the newspaper's website or app.

**Podcasts:** Some newspapers offer podcasts that cover the top stories of the day. These podcasts can be downloaded and listened to at any time.

**Voice assistants:** Voice assistants such as Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant, and Apple Siri can read the news aloud from newspapers that are compatible with these devices.

**It's worth noting that the availability of these audio versions may vary depending on the newspaper and the country or region in which you live."**

**As you can see, AI has come a long way and can be a helpful tool. You may notice it is not perfect; specifics are missing, as is creative and emotional thinking. But it is a great start!**

**AI can help to bridge communication gaps, facilitate access to information, and foster independence, especially for people with low vision. I can't wait to see where this takes us!**

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

# Register for POB READS

Summer is an excellent time for leisure reading! Join **POB READS** – a casual book club for all with vision challenges! 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 **July 7 at 11 a.m.** The next book is **World Travel: An Irreverent Guide** by Anthony Bourdain and Laurie Woolever.

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](http://pobreads.org) or call (301) 951-4444.

To also start receiving an electronic copy of this newsletter, please email [communications@youreyes.org](mailto:communications@youreyes.org).

FREE MATTER  
For the Blind or  
Handicapped

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

