



# Your Eyes

NOVEMBER 2023



TODAY

## Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness Month

November is **National Diabetes Awareness Month**, a time to raise awareness about the importance of diabetes management and prevention. However, did you know that diabetes can also cause permanent vision loss?

Diabetes (Type-1 and Type-2) increases the chances of many health implications, including vision loss! People with diabetes are at double the risk of glaucoma and two to five times as likely to develop cataracts, especially at a younger age. Also, diabetic retinopathy, a condition caused directly by diabetes, is the leading cause of new blindness in adults.

High and uncontrolled blood sugars can cause vision loss and blindness by affecting blood vessels in the retina. It increases the chances of retinal detachment and diabetic macular edema (DME), where blood vessels in the retina leak and cause swelling in the macula (part of the retina), causing blurred vision.

(Continued on next page)

**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

**(Continued from previous page)**

Early stages usually lack symptoms, while in later stages, dark, floating spots or “cobwebs” may start appearing, and blurred vision will occur. Catching the disease early can help prevent and slow vision loss from occurring.

The longer someone has diabetes, the more likely they will get this eye disease. Forty-five percent of those with diagnosed diabetes have some degree of diabetic retinopathy. African- and Mexican-Americans are at the highest risk, especially for advanced stages (three and two times as likely, respectively).

If you have diabetes, be sure to have a **comprehensive dilated eye exam** at least once a year. Diabetic eye disease can be detected early and treated before noticeable vision loss occurs. Additionally, stay on **TRACK**. That is: **T**ake your medications as prescribed by your doctor; **R**each and maintain a healthy weight; **A**dd more physical activity to your daily routine; **C**ontrol your ABC’s—A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels; and **K**ick the smoking habit.

The number of individuals with diabetic eye disease is predicted to increase by 48% by 2030. Everyone with diabetes needs to know about the steps they can take to protect their vision!

To learn more, speak to your doctor, or visit [www.nei.nih.gov/diabetes](http://www.nei.nih.gov/diabetes).

# Resource of the Month

## GoGo Grandparent

---

Many readers may utilize the area paratransit authority (MetroAccess), volunteer ride groups, or local taxi services. And those with a smartphone may use the rideshare services of Uber or Lyft. However, using these apps may not be an option if one does not have a smartphone.

Enter GoGo Grandparent! GoGo Grandparent is a concierge service that will schedule an Uber/Lyft ride on short notice. Not only can they schedule rides, but they also offer:

- Assistance in ordering and picking up groceries
- Meal delivery from restaurants
- Prescription medication delivery
- Assistance in getting connected with home repairs

This robust service can assist with many traditional daily tasks requiring transportation. This service is available 24/7.

There is a fee for these services. Contact GoGo Grandparent to learn more and decide what is best for you. To learn more or sign up, visit [gogograndparent.com](http://gogograndparent.com) or call (855) 464-6872.

(POB does not endorse any product or service. Any purchase decisions are made at the client's discretion.)

# Calendar of Events

**NOVEMBER 2023**

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

**WED  
8**

## **WMATA Update: Accessible Transportation**

**2 p.m. – 3 p.m. • Leisure World Lions Group**

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) offers many services, including a paratransit authority for those unable to navigate the standard public transit system. Join **Brigid Doherty** to learn about what this is, what is new, and how you can make the most of this valuable resource.

**Leisure World Clubhouse II Edmondson Room**  
3300 N Leisure World Blvd., Silver Spring, MD

---

**TUE  
14**

## **Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness Month (Virtual Event)**

**11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. • Low Vision Support Group**

People with diabetes are more likely to develop blinding eye diseases, such as diabetic retinopathy or glaucoma. Join **Thomas Dunnn, M.D., Washington National Eye Center Ophthalmology Resident**, to learn more and bring your questions.

Hosted by **Washington National Eye Center**.

## **NOVEMBER 2023** (continued)

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

**TUE  
14**

### **Dining with Low Vision (Virtual Event)**

**6 p.m. – 7 p.m. • Stargardt's Network**

Navigating dining situations with vision loss can be difficult. What's on my plate? Is that hot sauce or ketchup? Dining out may be feared when we are not confident in our abilities. Join us, and let's share our strategies, challenges, and accommodations! Hosted by **Prevention of Blindness Society**.

---

**WED  
15**

### **Managing Money with Low Vision**

#### **Low Vision Town Hall (Virtual Event)**

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

Speaker: **Mary Hughes, Certified Daily Money Manager**  
How do we manage our finances when we cannot see the small print on our financial statements? What about paying bills? And what is a daily money manager? Join us as we delve into this important topic together!  
Call **(301) 951-4444** to register.

---

**(Additional events on next page)**

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

**TUE  
21**

## **What's the Deal with Artificial Intelligence and Chat GPT? (Virtual Event)**

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

We are hearing on the news and from friends and family about this new thing called “ChatGPT.” Just what is this? And how can it help those of us with vision impairments? Join us to learn more!

---

**THU  
30**

## **Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness Month**

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

**Guest Speaker: Lindsay Dawson, M.D., Washington Eye Physicians and Surgeons**

Learn how diabetes increases our risks of vision loss, with a focus on diabetic retinopathy, the leading cause of blindness among working-age adults and one of the fastest-rising eye health conditions

To RSVP, call (301) 656-2797.

**Friendship Heights Village Center**

**4433 South Park Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD**

---



Listen and watch replays of recent webinars and other POB events at: [www.youreyes.org/replays](http://www.youreyes.org/replays)

# Living with Low Vision

## Memory Wellness

---

By Tara Aziz

There is an association between vision impairment and dementia. A study funded by the National Institute on Aging found that nearly 100,000 U.S. dementia cases could have been prevented through improved eye care.

Now to the positive side. Even with vision loss, we can combat our risk by keeping our minds (and bodies) active. Here are a few things we can do to keep our minds active:

Social interaction and avoiding isolation as much as we can is key. Converse with others – in person, over the phone, even on social media. You may also write emails, or keep a journal.

Play “brain games” like crossword puzzles, Sudoku, or chess. Large print versions are available, and you can download them to your computer too.

Taking up a hobby, like learning a music instrument or a new language, is possible despite the vision challenges. These will certainly get those brain cells working!

Let’s try to stay mentally active despite our vision challenges. Call the POB Low Vision Resource and Information Hotline at **(301) 951-4444** to speak with a Resource Navigator.

# Save the Date: December 10

**DEC  
10**

## **Being the Light: Friends and Family Connection Event**

**12 p.m.**

You, your friends, and your family are invited to join us for a luncheon panel discussion moderated by Suleiman Alibhai, O.D., low vision specialist. Tickets will be available soon.

For more information, contact **Sean Curry** at (202) 234-1010, ext. 233, or [scurry@youreyes.org](mailto:scurry@youreyes.org).

**Bender JCC of Greater Washington**  
6125 Montrose Rd., Rockville, MD

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

