

# Healthy eyes are happy eyes



supporting blind and  
partially sighted people

**Your eyes might look great and your eyesight might be fine, but that doesn't mean your eyes are healthy.**

**Many eye conditions have no early symptoms, so you may not know your sight is being damaged.**

**Only an eye health check, or "eye test", can see eye disease.**

**The good news: when eye conditions are detected early, the right type of treatment could safeguard your sight.**

**Never dismiss a change to your sight as “just part of getting older”. If you notice a change to your sight, visit your local optician immediately.**

**Book an eye health check today to help protect your sight. For many people this check-up is free.**

## Who needs a regular eye health check?

You do! Everyone should have their eyes checked every two years. If you have diabetes or a family history of glaucoma you should have your eyes checked every year.

## What happens?

Your optician/optometrist will tailor the test to suit your individual needs. They will ask about your general health, lifestyle and family history, and then check your eyesight, eye health and eye muscles.

## Where do I go?

You can go to your local optician to make an appointment.

## How much does it cost?

Costs generally vary between £17 and £30, but you may qualify for a free NHS check-up if you:

- are over 60 years of age
- are a child under 16 (or under 19 and in full-time education)
- have diabetes

- are aged 40 and older with an immediate family member with glaucoma
- are living on a low income

Opticians who are signed up to the Welsh Eye Care Initiative also provide free eye health checks if you:

- have sight in one eye only
- have a hearing impairment or are profoundly deaf
- suffer from retinitis pigmentosa
- have family origins that are Black African, Black Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi
- are at risk of eye disease by other reasons of race or family history.

If you use a computer at work your employer is obliged to pay for an eye health check. NHS check-ups can be completed at most high street opticians. To see if you're entitled to a free test ask your local optician, visit [rnib.org.uk/eyehealth](http://rnib.org.uk/eyehealth) or call us on 0303 123 9999.

Children and people on low incomes may also qualify for help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses.

# Keep your eyes healthy between regular check-ups

## Sport and DIY

Sport, flying debris and fine particles cause thousands of eye injuries each year, but sport and safety goggles can protect your eyes from injury. Wear goggles marked “European Standard BS EN 166:2002”.

## Smoking

The link between smoking and macular degeneration is as strong as the link between smoking and lung cancer. By not smoking you can reduce the risk of developing age-related macular degeneration (AMD) – the UK's biggest cause of blindness.

## The sun

The sun's UVA and UVB rays can harm your eyes and increase your risk of developing cataracts and AMD. Wearing glasses or contact lenses with a UV filter will help protect your eyes. Wear sunglasses marked “CE” or “British Standard BS EN 1836:2005”.

## Diet

Being overweight increases your risk of diabetes, which can lead to sight loss. By eating a balanced diet, rich in fruit and vegetables, you could keep your eyes healthy.

## RNIB Helpline

If you'd like more information about eye health checks or the information contained in this leaflet please call our Helpline on 0303 123 9999 or visit [rnib.org.uk](http://rnib.org.uk)

## Spread the message

Everyone needs to understand the importance of getting their eyes tested – so help us spread the message. To order more copies of this leaflet call our Helpline on 0303 123 9999 or email [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

## Help us to do more

To support RNIB's work, call our Fundraising Enquiry Line on 0845 345 0054 or visit [rnib.org.uk/getinvolved](http://rnib.org.uk/getinvolved)

## About RNIB

RNIB is the leading charity working in the UK offering practical support, advice and information to anyone with sight loss or those who work with them.

Please contact us for a full list of the information sources used in this leaflet.

This leaflet is also available in braille and audio by calling our Helpline.

