

Optical Health in our Aged Care communities

Dry eyes: when your tears aren't able to provide adequate lubrication for your eyes leading to blurred vision, discomfort, and increased infection risk.

1 in 3

Adults are affected

Treatment options include artificial tears, gels and ointments.

Vision naturally changes as we age, but some changes can significantly affect independence, safety, and quality of life. Chronic eye conditions affect over 90% of people aged over 65.

Ageing leads to:

- Loss of elasticity in the eye lens (presbyopia)
- Reduced tear production causing dry eyes
- Slower adaptation to light changes
- Increased risk of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), cataract formation, and glaucoma

Regular, preventative eye exams essential for older adults

Cataracts: when the normally clear lens in your eye becomes foggy due to protein breakdown. This prevents your eye from focusing on light leading to blurred vision or blindness. They typically develop in both eyes, but not necessarily at the same rate.

Treatment involves surgically removing the affected lens and replacing it with an artificial one.

Glaucoma is the name given to a group of eye disease where vision is lost due to damage to the optic nerve often (but not always) associated with increased intraocular pressure (this is the pressure of the fluid inside your eye to maintain its shape and function).

1 in 50

Australians will develop glaucoma in their lifetime

50%

of people with glaucoma don't know they have it

Glaucoma risk increases significantly with age and is a leading cause of blindness in those over 60 years of age.

Over 60: High-risk for developing primary open-angle glaucoma.

80+: Incidence rises to roughly 10-12.5% (1 in 8).

Medication adherence is a key aspect of managing glaucoma. Prescription eye drops (including prostaglandin analogues (e.g. latanoprost) improve drainage and beta blockers (e.g. timolol) reduce fluid production. Oral medications (e.g. acetazolamide) may be used short-term to lower pressure in acute cases.

Diabetic Retinopathy

Non-Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy (NPDR) is the early stage of diabetic eye disease caused by chronic high blood sugar from diabetes damaging retinal blood vessels, causing them to leak fluid, swell, or close.

Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy (PDR) is considered the later stage of diabetic retinopathy is primarily caused by long-term, poorly managed diabetes which can trigger the growth of fragile, abnormal new blood vessels (neovascularization) that bleed and cause vision loss.

Nearly 1 in 3

Australians in residential aged care are living with diabetes

98% of serious vision loss from diabetes can be prevented with regular eye examinations and early treatment focused on controlling blood sugar, blood pressure, and lipids to prevent progression.