

# Women and Eye Health Risks

Most women understand how important it is to visit the doctor regularly so they can stay healthy and feel their best. However, many don't realize this means having their eyes checked as well. This is especially important for women since they are more likely than men to suffer from eye-related diseases and conditions such as:

- Cataract
- Glaucoma
- Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

Unfortunately, many women don't know about this heightened risk and are not doing enough to care for their healthy sight.

This lack of action can lead to staggering healthcare costs down the road. Plus, people with vision problems are more likely to miss work and to suffer from headaches, eyestrain, and fatigue that may keep them from performing at their full potential, on and off the job.

## Understanding the Impact of Other Health Conditions on Vision

Not only are women at greater risk for many eye diseases, they are also at risk for several overall health conditions that impact their vision. These include:

- **Diabetes** – One in 10 American women over the age of 20 has diabetes (CDC). Diabetes increases risk for several eye diseases, diabetic retinopathy, most commonly, as well as damage from ultraviolet (UV) light. People with diabetes often experience light sensitivity, difficulty distinguishing colors in low lighting, and trouble driving at night.
  - Gestational diabetes is rare and disappears post-pregnancy, but women who have experienced the condition have a 40-60% chance of developing diabetes in the next five to 10 years (CDC).
- **Autoimmune diseases** – Women are more likely to develop several autoimmune diseases that can affect the eyes. These include:
  - Multiple sclerosis (MS)
  - Lupus
  - Rheumatoid arthritis
  - Sjögren's syndrome



MS often causes temporary burning in the eyes or vision loss. Meanwhile, Sjögren's, which dries out moisture-producing glands in the body, causes the most eye-related disease. Of the one million people in the United States with Sjögren's, 90 percent are women.

- **Breast and other cancers** – Some cancer treatments can cause:
  - Bleeding in the eye
  - Light sensitivity
  - Cataract
  - Dry, itchy eyes

*Source: Transitions Optical, Inc.*