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Low Vision Doesn't Have to Mean Loss of Independence, Say Wisconsin Optometrists

Doctors encourage early evaluation and modern low-vision tools that help patients stay active and self-reliant.

MADISON, Wis. – What Everyday activities like reading mail, cooking, driving, or recognizing faces can become difficult for people with low vision, but eye care experts say many patients can maintain independence and quality of life with proper diagnosis, support, and specialized care.

Low vision is a visual impairment that cannot be fully corrected with standard glasses, contact lenses, medication, or surgery. It is commonly linked to conditions such as age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and cataracts.

Members of the Wisconsin Optometric Association are highlighting available low vision services and tools that help patients continue living independently.

“Many people believe that if vision cannot be fully restored, there are no meaningful options left. That is simply not true,” said Dr. Ryan Deibert, 2026 WOA President and practicing optometrist in New Berlin. “With early diagnosis and the right low vision strategies and devices, patients can continue to read, work, and manage daily tasks with confidence.”

Vision Loss Ranks Among Americans' Top Health Fears

National survey data from the American Optometric Association shows vision loss ranks as the top physical health fear among adults, above memory, mobility, and hearing loss. A common concern is losing the ability to live independently. Doctors say timely care can significantly change outcomes.

Early Detection and Healthy Habits Matter

“Early detection is critical,” Dr. Deibert said. “If you have diabetes, glaucoma risk, macular degeneration, cataracts, or notice changes in your vision, schedule a comprehensive eye exam. Early care expands treatment and adaptation options.”

Optometrists also recommend healthy habits that support eye health, including not smoking, balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, and proper management of chronic conditions.

Practical Low Vision Solutions Are Available

Low vision care may include magnification devices, improved lighting, contrast tools, adaptive technology, and personalized rehabilitation strategies that help patients perform daily activities more safely and efficiently.

“Low vision does not have to define a person's future,” Dr. Deibert said. “The right care plan can help people stay independent and engaged.”

To find a licensed doctor of optometry, visit www.woa-eyes.org.

About the AOA American Eye-Q® survey

The 2017 American Eye-Q® survey was created and commissioned in conjunction with Edelman Intelligence. From November 3 through November 9, Edelman conducted 1,002 online survey among Americans 18 years and older who embodied a nationally representative sample of the U.S. general population (margin of error is plus or minus 3.10 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.)

About the Wisconsin Optometric Association

The Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA) is a nonprofit affiliation of licensed doctors of optometry and associated businesses dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the vision welfare of the people of Wisconsin. The WOA accomplishes its goals through: education and dissemination of information, organized governmental activity, legislation and regulation, mediation with consumer and public interest groups, and provision of collective benefits to its members. Approximately 640 doctors of optometry are currently members of the WOA, located in nearly every county in the state. All members must be licensed to practice optometry by the State of Wisconsin. For more information, visit WOA's website at www.woa-eyes.org.