

Areas of patient education may include:

a. Healthy Lifestyle

A healthy diet and regular exercise are important to good eye health. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle may help to prevent or slow the progression of glaucoma, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, and age-related macular degeneration in certain individuals¹⁶⁵⁻¹⁷⁰ and may be a factor in lowering blood pressure and preventing cardiovascular disease.¹⁷¹⁻¹⁷⁴

CONSENSUS-BASED ACTION STATEMENT: Eye doctors should counsel their patients on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and remain alert for new research that demonstrates the effects of diet and exercise on ocular and general health.

Evidence Quality: An evaluation of published research to support or refute the use of this recommendation was not conducted for this guideline.

Benefits and Harms Assessment: Implementation of this recommendation is likely to increase patient awareness of the value of a healthy diet and exercise on their eye and general health. The benefits of this recommendation were established by expert consensus opinion.

b. Smoking Cessation

Smoking can play a significant role in general and ocular health. Individuals who smoke are at increased risk for the development of cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes.¹⁷⁵ In addition, cigarette smoking places them at risk for a number of eye diseases, including cataracts,^{176,177} age-related macular degeneration,^{178,179} glaucoma,¹⁸⁰ ocular surface disorders,¹⁸¹ and the development of visual impairment.¹⁸²

Smoking cessation, along with an active lifestyle, may be important in preserving visual function and reducing visual impairment. Therefore, behavioral modifications may play a role in preventing visual impairment in adults.¹⁸³ (Evidence Grade: B) Smoking cessation is associated with a reduced risk of cataract formation, and some early lens damage may be reversible. The reduction in risk appears strongest for those who have quit smoking within the past decade, but is not so robust in those who quit longer than ten years ago.¹⁷⁶ (Evidence Grade: B)

Although they are aware of the impact of smoking on ocular health, doctors of optometry don't always talk to their patients about smoking or encourage smoking cessation. They should discuss the use of tobacco products and advise cessation treatment, if appropriate.¹⁸⁴ (Evidence Grade: D)

Clinical note: Smoking plays a significant role in ocular disease. Assessing a patient's smoking status, as well as addressing smoking cessation, are important topics for discussion with patients.¹⁸⁵ (Evidence Grade D)

EVIDENCE-BASED ACTION STATEMENT: Eye doctors should counsel their patients on smoking cessation. They should document discussions with their patients about their smoking status and inform them about the benefits to their eyes, vision, and overall health through smoking cessation.^{176,183}

Evidence Quality: Grade B, Cohort-Prospective Studies.

Level of Confidence: Medium.

Clinical Recommendation Level: Recommendation. This recommendation should generally be followed but remain alert for new information.