

**Eye Health Statistics at a Glance**  
**Compiled by American Academy of Ophthalmology**  
**Updated April 2011**

**EYE DISEASES**

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have cataracts?**

A: Cataract affects nearly 22 million Americans age 40 and older. By age 80, more than half of all Americans have cataract. Direct medical costs for cataract treatment are estimated at \$6.8 billion annually. *[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S.: Prevalence of Adult Vision Impairment and Age-Related Eye Disease in America. Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute, 2008. : [http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008\\_update/VPUS\\_2008\\_update.pdf](http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008_update/VPUS_2008_update.pdf)]*

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have glaucoma?**

A: Glaucoma affects almost 2.3 million Americans age 40 and older.  
*[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S.: Prevalence of Adult Vision Impairment and Age-Related Eye Disease in America. Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute, 2008. [http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008\\_update/VPUS\\_2008\\_update.pdf](http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008_update/VPUS_2008_update.pdf)]*

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have age-related macular degeneration (AMD)?**

A: More than 2 million Americans age 50 and older have advanced AMD, the stage that can lead to severe vision impairment.  
*[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S.: Prevalence of Adult Vision Impairment and Age-Related Eye Disease in America. Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute, 2008. [http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008\\_update/VPUS\\_2008\\_update.pdf](http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008_update/VPUS_2008_update.pdf)]*

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have diabetic retinopathy?**

A: Diabetic retinopathy affects more than 4.4 million Americans age 40 and older.  
*[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S.: Prevalence of Adult Vision Impairment and Age-Related Eye Disease in America. Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute, 2008. [http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008\\_update/VPUS\\_2008\\_update.pdf](http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008_update/VPUS_2008_update.pdf)]*

The number of people in the United States with diabetes is increasing. Nearly 26 million Americans have diabetes. About 27 percent of those with diabetes—7 million Americans—do not know they have the disease. Diabetes affects 11.3 percent of adults age 20 and older [Source: CDC 2011 National Diabetes Fact Sheet Press Release. [http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2011/p0126\\_diabetes.html](http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2011/p0126_diabetes.html)]

Duration of diabetes is a major risk factor associated with the development of diabetic retinopathy; in other words, the longer a person has diabetes, the more likely he or she is to develop diabetic retinopathy. [Source: American Academy of Ophthalmology Retina Panel. Preferred Practice Pattern® Guidelines. Diabetic Retinopathy. San Francisco, CA: American Academy of Ophthalmology; 2008. <http://www.aao.org/ppp>]

**Q: How many people in the U.S. have dry eye?**

A: The prevalence of dry eye syndrome increases with age. An estimated 3.2 million women age 50 and over and 1.68 million men age 50 and over are affected by dry eye syndrome. [Sources: Schaumberg DA, Sullivan DA, Buring JE, Dana MR. Prevalence of dry eye syndrome among US women. *Am J Ophthalmol.* 2003;136:318-26. and Schaumberg DA, Dana R, Buring JE, Sullivan DA. Prevalence of dry eye disease among US men: estimates from the Physicians' Health Studies. *Arch Ophthalmol.* 2009;127:763-8.]

**Q: How many corneal transplants are performed in the U.S. annually?**

A: A total of 42,642 corneal transplants were performed in the United States in 2010. [Source: Eye Bank Association of America, Frequently Asked Questions. <http://www.restoreight.org/files/Eye%20Donor%20Month%20FAQs.pdf>]

**VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AND BLINDNESS**

**Q: How many people in the U.S. are visually impaired?**

A: Among people age 40 and older, more than 3.6 million are visually impaired, defined as 20/40 or worse vision in the better eye even with eyeglasses. [Source: Vision Problems in the U.S.: Prevalence of Adult Vision Impairment and Age-Related Eye Disease in America. Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute, 2008. [http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008\\_update/VPUS\\_2008\\_update.pdf](http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008_update/VPUS_2008_update.pdf)]

**Q: How many people in the U.S. are legally blind?**

A: More than one million people, age 40 and older are legally blind. (Defined as visual acuity, with best correction in the better eye, worse than or equal to 20/200, or visual field less than 20 degrees in diameter.)

*[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S.: Prevalence of Adult Vision Impairment and Age-Related Eye Disease in America. Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute, 2008.*

[http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008\\_update/VPUS\\_2008\\_update.pdf](http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008_update/VPUS_2008_update.pdf)

**Q: How many people in the U.S. are color blind?**

A: Red-green color vision defects are the most common form of color vision deficiency. Approximately 8 percent of men and 0.5 percent of women among populations with Northern European ancestry have red-green color defects. The incidence of this condition is lower in almost all other populations studied. *[Source: Genetics Home Reference: Color vision deficiency, National Library of Medicine*

<http://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/color-vision-deficiency>

**EYE INJURIES**

**Q: How many people in the U.S. suffer eye injuries each year?**

A: Each year more than 2.5 million eye injuries occur and 50,000 people permanently lose part or all of their vision. Ninety percent (90%) of all eye injuries can be prevented by using protective eyewear.

*[Source: United States Eye Injury Registry summary report, 1998-2002]*

**Q: Who is most likely to be injured?**

A: Nearly half (47.6 percent) of all eye injuries occur in people 18 to 45 years of age.

A: Males are at greater risk in all age groups: 73 percent of eye injuries occur in males. *[Source: United States Eye Injury Registry summary report, 1998-2002]*

**Q: Where do most eye injuries occur?**

A: Nearly half (44.1 percent) happen in the home.

A: 14.7 percent of eye injuries occur during sports; among children age 5 to 14, this is the most common form of eye injury. Most could be prevented through use of appropriate protective eyewear. *[Source: United States Eye Injury Registry summary report, 1998-2002]*

## **REFRACTIVE ERRORS**

### **Q: How many people in the U.S. have myopia (nearsightedness) ( $\geq 1.0$ diopters)?**

A: More than 32 million Americans age 40 and older are myopic.

*[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S.: Prevalence of Adult Vision Impairment and Age-Related Eye Disease in America. Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute, 2008.*

[http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008\\_update/VPUS\\_2008\\_update.pdf](http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008_update/VPUS_2008_update.pdf)

### **Q: How many people in the U.S. have hyperopia (farsightedness) ( $\geq 3.0$ diopters)?**

A: More than 12 million Americans age 40 and older are hyperopic.

*[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S.: Prevalence of Adult Vision Impairment and Age-Related Eye Disease in America. Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute, 2008.*

[http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008\\_update/VPUS\\_2008\\_update.pdf](http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008_update/VPUS_2008_update.pdf)

### **Q: What is the prevalence of astigmatism in the United States?**

A: This common refractive error occurs in about one in three people and may occur in combination with near- or farsightedness. It causes blurry vision and is due to the cornea being less than perfectly rounded. *[Source: Vitale S, Ellwein L, Cotch MF, Ferris FL 3rd, Sperduto R. Prevalence of refractive error in the United States, 1999-2004. Arch Ophthalmol. 2008;126:1111-9.]*

### **Q: How many Americans wear some type of corrective eyewear?**

A: More than 150 million Americans use corrective eyewear to compensate for refractive errors. Americans spend more than \$15 billion each year on eyewear.

*[Source: Vision Problems in the U.S.: Prevalence of Adult Vision Impairment and Age-Related Eye Disease in America. Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute, 2008.*

[http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008\\_update/VPUS\\_2008\\_update.pdf](http://www.preventblindness.org/vpus/2008_update/VPUS_2008_update.pdf)

### **Q: How many people wear contact lenses in the U.S.?**

A: Approximately 36 million Americans wear contact lenses.

*[Source: Barr JT. Annual report: Contact lenses 2005. Contact Lens Spectrum January 2006.*

[http://www.clspectrum.com/article.aspx?article=12913.](http://www.clspectrum.com/article.aspx?article=12913)

**Q: How many refractive surgical procedures are performed annually in the U.S.?**

A: Approximately 800,000 procedures were performed in 2010. [Source: Market Scope <http://www.ophmanagement.com/printarticle.aspx?article=104645>]

## **OPHTHALMOLOGISTS**

**Q: How many ophthalmologists are there in the U.S.?**

A: There are 18,305 active ophthalmologists in the U.S. [Source: *Physician Characteristics and Distribution in the U.S., 2011 edition*. American Medical Association. (Data compiled as of Dec. 31, 2009 from the AMA Physician Masterfile.)]

**Q: How many ophthalmologists are there worldwide (including the U.S.)?**

A: There are approximately 200,000 ophthalmologists worldwide. [Source: *International Council of Ophthalmology*.]

**Q: Where can I get more information on ophthalmology as a career?**

A: Envision Ophthalmology [<http://www.aao.org/careers/envision/index.cfm>]