

# Why women should take extra care of their eyes



## Both pregnancy and aging affect eyesight

Being able to see is something a lot of us take for granted, until we can't see as clearly as we used to. Subtle changes make it difficult to notice when eye problems develop. With early detection, many eye problems can be treated and the risk of vision loss lowered. That is why it is so important to go to an eye doctor regularly to have your vision checked.

Women have more vision problems than men. Two-thirds of all people who have vision problems are women.<sup>1</sup> This is because pregnancy and aging affect eyesight. Having a baby can bring on certain issues that affect vision, while living longer puts women at a higher risk for age-related eye diseases.



Here are some age- and pregnancy-related eye conditions that women may face:

### As a result of aging

- **Age-related macular degeneration (AMD).** This is when the cells in the back of the eye begin to go bad as people get older. It can lead to poor vision and blind spots.
- **Diabetic retinopathy.** This happens in people who have diabetes because of changes in the blood vessels of the retina (the tissue that lines the back of the eye). This is the leading cause of blindness in American adults.<sup>2</sup>
- **Dry eye syndrome.** If your eyes don't make enough tears, you may have this condition. It can cause itching, burning and a gritty feeling in the eyes.

### During pregnancy

- **Diabetes and high blood pressure.** There is an increased risk of getting these health problems during pregnancy. The good news is that they can often be found during an eye exam even before an OB/GYN would test for them.
- **Hormonal changes.** Increased hormone levels can affect a woman's eyesight, so special care may be needed. An eye doctor can help a mom-to-be keep her eyes healthy while she's pregnant. Vision often returns to normal shortly after giving birth.<sup>3</sup>

**For more information on eye health and how to help keep your vision healthy, go to [anthem.com/eyehealth](http://anthem.com/eyehealth).**

**Don't wait for things to get blurry  
Make an appointment for an eye exam today.**

1 Women's Eye Health.org website: Women's Eye Health Facts (Accessed May 2015): w-e-h.org.

2 National Eye Institute website: Facts About Diabetic Eye Disease (Accessed May 2015): nei.nih.gov.

3 WebMD, *Pregnancy and Vision* (Accessed May 2015): webmd.com.