

# **Jeepers, Creepers, Take Care of Those Peepers!**

Our eyes—or peepers—let us experience the world around us. “Don't take good eye health for granted,” says Ophthalmologist Louis Schott, M.D. “Even if you have never experienced eye injuries, chronic poor vision or the effects of aging on your eyes, visiting an eye specialist is still a good decision because some eye diseases can be present without any outward signs of a vision problem.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends an eye disease screening for all aging adults, with a baseline exam at the age of 40. Dr. Schott says this exam is important because it can detect disease early on, creating a better opportunity for treatment and preservation of sight.

“Chronic health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure have the potential to weaken or damage eyes and long-term vision health,” explains Dr. Schott. “Always discuss your concerns about your vision with your healthcare provider, even if it seems minor.”

As we age, many of us will experience general changes in eye health such as the need for reading glasses or dry eyes. “These are manageable,” says Dr. Schott, “but be proactive with unusual vision changes. If you are experiencing dizziness, nausea, headaches, blurry vision, redness anywhere around the eye, or eye pain, see your healthcare provider.” Your healthcare provider may recommend a thorough eye exam for an “inside” look at your eyes by a vision specialist.

“Age-related macular degeneration or ARMD is the most common of all retinal disorders and requires prompt attention,” says Dr. Schott. ARMD is the leading cause of irreversible vision loss for older adults. Research by the National Eye Institute's Age-Related Eye Disease Study indicates both hereditary and environmental factors can be linked to ARMD. “You can't change your genetics,” says Dr. Schott, “but you can maintain retina health by not smoking and by reducing harmful UV ray exposure from sunlight.”

Dr. Schott treats patients requiring general eye care and is also board certified to provide complete medical and surgical eye care such as cataract removal and lens implant, laser surgery for glaucoma and diabetes, and glaucoma implant surgery to relieve eye pressure for longer lasting results. Other types of procedures include: chalazion repair (removal of lumps in eyelid); ectropion repair (sagging and outward turning of the lower eyelid and eyelashes) and temporal artery biopsy (to check for inflammation or damage to the temporal artery). Dr. Schott provides these services through Outpatient Specialists at Highland District Hospital. For an appointment with Dr. Schott, please call (937) 393-6169.

Taking care of yourself is as good for your eyes as it is for the rest of your body. Wearing protective eyewear, eating right and exercising regularly are highly recommended for taking proper care of those prodigious peepers at any age.