

## MEDICAL



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**Dr. Mark D. Fromer**  
is a board-certified  
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## LOW VISION

### What Is Low Vision?

Low Vision is partial vision loss and the level of vision is 20/70 or worse (perfect visual acuity is 20/20). It cannot be fully corrected with conventional glasses.

A person with low vision has severely reduced visual acuity or contrast sensitivity, a significantly obstructed field of vision or all three. Although low vision can occur at any stage in life, it primarily affects the elderly.

However, low vision is not a natural part of aging. Some of the most common causes of low vision includes; glaucoma, macular degeneration, Retinitis Pigmentosa.

### Signs of Low Vision

- Difficulty recognizing familiar faces or recognizing objects at a distance, like street signs or bus signs.
- Difficulty reading, print appears broken, distorted or incomplete.
- Difficulty seeing objects and potential hazards such as steps, curbs, walls, uneven surfaces and furniture.
- Difficulty differentiating colors, particularly in the green-blue-violet range. The symptoms described above may not necessarily mean that you have low vision. However, if you experience one or more of these symptoms, contact your eye doctor for a complete exam. Your eye doctor can tell the difference between normal changes which are common with age and changes caused by eye disease.

### Improving Your Functional Vision with the Help of Devices

If your vision loss can't be corrected by medical or surgical interventions, an ophthalmologist or optometrist specializing in low vision can evaluate how you see and prescribe optical devices to maximize your remaining vision.

This functional vision assessment is an important step in helping improve your quality of life.

Even with regular eyeglasses or contact lenses, a visual image, whether a sentence from a book or a crosswalk at a busy intersection may appear distorted, blurred or incomplete if you have low vision.

A low vision doctor may recommend or prescribe devices such as magnifiers and tinted lenses to help you take full advantage of the sight you have.

Non-optical devices such as large-print clocks and remote controls, as well as signa

ture and writing guides, are also popular. Vision rehabilitation can help.

Vision rehabilitation services equip you with skills and strategies to help you remain safe, independent and active at any stage of life.

### Low Vision Exams

To determine the extent of your useful vision, you will need to have your eyes examined. Because low vision examinations may involve a variety of tests, they are often more time consuming than the standard examination.

For instance, refraction may be done through a telescope or trial lens so you can judge which lens is best.

### Treatment

Ophthalmologists, optometrists and occupational therapists make up the team of health care professionals who will work with you starting with your vision examination, and continuing to work with you to identify treatment options, which include:

- Optical devices that will help you adapt, such as magnifiers, telephones or closed-circuit television.
- Techniques that will help you utilize your remaining vision.
- Environmental modifications to maximize your remaining vision.
- Adaptive non-optical devices, such as large-print cookbooks and talking watches.

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## Elderly should eat healthy, exercise

**WASHINGTON:** Age isn't a factor when it comes to improving your health and leading a healthier lifestyle, say researchers in the US who suggest that a better diet and exercise is all that's needed to live better, even if you've had an unhealthy lifestyle in the past.

The study, led by Dr Richard S Rivlin, professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College and attending physician at New York-Presbyterian / Weill Cornell, stated that many elderly people feel that it is too late for them to improve their health, but that is simply not true.

"I think this is an extremely important and positive message. Many elderly people feel that it is too late for them to improve their health, but that is simply not true," Rivlin said.

In the study, the researchers analysed that how the elderly could ward off risks to their health late in life by improving body composition, i.e. by lowering fat and boosting muscle mass, adhering to a low-calorie and low-fat diet, high in vegetables and fruits, with a regular exercise plan, could help the elderly stave off the diseases of aging.

"When measures to combat chronic disease are started in one's 60s and 70s, there are

still definite benefits. But older adults must realize that there is no quick fix. They must change their lifestyles," Rivlin said.

The specific findings were - lowering high blood pressure or hypertension, major risk for cardiovascular disease, through improved diet and exercise had more dramatic health benefits for the elderly than for any other age group. Older adults who adhered to a low-calorie diet with regular exercise had lower rates of cancer also benefits of weight training include increased ability to burn calories and prevention of osteoporosis.

As for the calcium and vitamin D supplements, it helped the seniors slow rates of bone loss and reduce the number of bone fractures.

"Our study reviews and presents the most up-to-date information showing the influence a healthy lifestyle may have on cardiovascular disease, cancer and osteoporosis," Rivlin said. "I also believe that the risk for other diseases, like diabetes and pulmonary disease, can also be avoided through later intervention. But, the earlier, the better," Rivlin added. The study is published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

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