

Lifestyle Factors and Glaucoma

by the AGS Patient Engagement Subcommittee

Even with limited evidence on lifestyle factors in glaucoma care, there are some general recommendations you could consider to decrease your risk of glaucoma.

Regular eye check-ups

Don't miss your regular eye exams. Glaucoma cannot be reversed and usually is without symptoms, so getting regular eye exams is important for early diagnosis and monitoring. If you are over the age of 40, and have a family history of glaucoma, you and your family members should get regular eye exams.

Exercise

Low intensity exercise 3-5 times/week may help lower your eye pressure and keep good blood flow to your eye. Avoid activities like heavy lifting that can increase your eye pressure while lifting. Do not hold your breath when lifting as it will increase your eye pressure. Please ask your eye doctor if your exercise routine is safe for your glaucoma.

Yoga

Avoid positions that put your eye below your heart for a long time. This can increase your eye pressure. Some breathing tools can be good for blood flow and may lower your eye pressure.

Meditation

Daily meditation (in addition to treatments from your doctor) may be helpful for people with glaucoma.

Wind instruments

If you play wind instruments and you have glaucoma, talk to your glaucoma doctor, as this activity may increase your eye pressure while blowing your instrument.

Diet

A well-balanced diet helps keep your body and eyes healthy. In general, green leafy vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, and whole grains are good for your general health and your eyes. It is possible that a diet high in vitamins and other antioxidants may be good for glaucoma patients.

Drink water

Stay hydrated by slowly sipping water. Avoid drinking too much too fast, because this can increase your eye pressure.

Caffeine

Control the amount of soda and coffee you drink because too much caffeine can increase your eye pressure.

Smoking

Smoking raises your blood pressure, causes inflammation, and increases your chances of getting diabetes, which is a risk factor for glaucoma. Smoking also causes dry eyes, which may make it uncomfortable to use your glaucoma eye drops.

Alcohol

If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation, as alcohol consumption can raise your eye pressure .

Marijuana

Marijuana is not recommended for glaucoma. With marijuana, the effect on eye pressure is unpredictable, and it can cause other side effects. We have more predictable treatments that are better at treating glaucoma.

Sleeping

Prop your head up while sleeping. Using a wedge pillow may help lower your eye pressure while you sleep. You should check with your doctor to see if the pillow is right for you. Sometimes glaucoma affects one eye more than the other. Sleeping on the same side as the worse eye can worsen the glaucoma on that side. If this is you, try to switch your sleeping position.

Blood pressure medications

If you are on blood pressure medications, tell your glaucoma doctor. Your glaucoma doctor and your primary medical doctor will work together to avoid medications or timings that can cause low blood pressure at night, which may worsen your glaucoma.

Protect your eyes

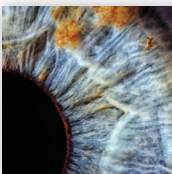
Always wear safety goggles during contact sports and high-risk jobs to avoid eye injury.

Reading and watching TV

Most activities do not affect glaucoma. For example, spending time on the computer or reading do not affect your eye pressure or worsen glaucoma.

Swimming and scuba diving

If you have had glaucoma surgery, check with your eye doctor to see if it is safe to do water sports like swimming and scuba diving.



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