

## Primary Care Eye Health – Charles P. Catania, MD

Many people think their eyesight is just fine, until they age a little and need those first pair of readers. The fact of the matter is that most of us like me have neglected our eyesight for years, until there is a problem. If you catch me in the office, you will see those readers on my face, so I thought it was important to remind others that your vision is important.

Improving your eyesight is important – about 11 million Americans over age 12 need vision correction – but it's just one of the reasons to get your eyes examined. Regular eye exams are also an important part of finding eye diseases early and preserving your vision.

Everyone should have a comprehensive dilated eye exam. A dilated eye exam is the only way to detect many common eye diseases such as glaucoma, diabetic eye disease and age-related macular degeneration in their early stages.

Everyone should know their family's eye health history. This will help to determine if you are at higher risk for developing an eye disease or condition.

We should all focus on eating right to protect our sight. Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, particularly dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale, or collard greens is important for keeping your eyes healthy. Also maintaining a healthy weight. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of developing diabetes and other systemic conditions, which can lead to vision loss.

Early treatment is critically important to prevent some common eye diseases from causing permanent vision loss or blindness:

- Cataracts (clouding of the lens), the leading cause of vision loss in the United States.
- Diabetic retinopathy (causes damage to blood vessels in the back of the eye), the leading cause of blindness in American adults.
- Glaucoma (a group of diseases that damage the optic nerve).
- Age-related macular degeneration (gradual breakdown of light-sensitive tissue in the eye).

Of the estimated 93 million US adults at high risk for vision loss, only half visited an eye doctor in the past 12 months. Regular eye care can have a life-changing impact on preserving the vision of millions of people. You should be getting a visual acuity eye exam with your yearly physical exam and talk with your primary care doctor about when you should have a dilated eye exam with a specialist.

If you have any of the following eye problems, make sure you discuss them with your primary care doctor or your eye doctor.

- Decreased vision.
- Draining or redness of the eye.
- Eye pain.
- Double vision.
- Floaters (tiny specks that appear to float before your eyes).
- Circles (halos) around lights.
- Flashes of light.

So, let's recap! Here are 8 ways we can keep our eyes healthy into the future:

1. Find an eye doctor you trust.
2. Ask how often you need a dilated eye exam.
3. Add more movement to your day.
4. Get your family talking... about eye health history!
5. Step up your healthy eating game.
6. Make a habit of wearing your sunglasses – even on cloudy days.
7. Stay on top of long-term health conditions – like diabetes and high blood pressure.
8. If you smoke, make a quit plan.

Remember PentaHealth is a primary care space that can help you or your family members stay healthy and that includes your vision health. Make an appointment today for your regular wellness exam and always call us for a same day appointment if you are experiencing any medical issues.

Dr. Charles P. Catania is the Medical Director for PentaHealth, he is Board Certified in Family Medicine and Hospice Medicine. He received his medical degree from the American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine; medically trained in England; and completed residency at Underwood Memorial Hospital in Woodbury, New Jersey, where he was named Chief Resident in 2009 and served on the New Jersey Academy of Family Physicians Board of Directors.

Dr. Catania has been in a private practice setting since 2010 and has been named “Readers’ Choice Top Doc” in South Jersey Magazine in August 2013, and “Top Doc” by his peers in Mainline Today Magazine in 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Dr. Catania has an interest in all facets of family medicine. He enjoys spending time and getting to know his patients on a personal level and providing care when they need it most. He loves working our walk-in hours and in our PentaHealth Today clinic on Sundays.

He treasures time with his wife and children, and he takes pride in bringing a very personal and friendly experience when caring for his patients here at PentaHealth.



Dr. Charles P. Catania

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