

Living With Low Vision:

What you should know

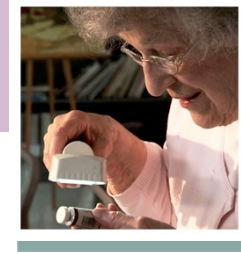
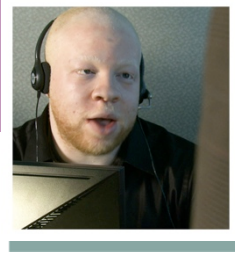


National Eye Institute



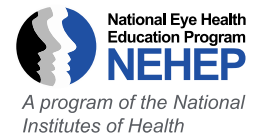
National Eye Health
Education Program
NEHEP

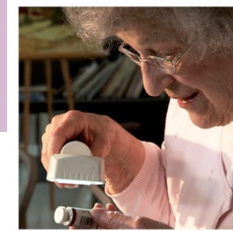
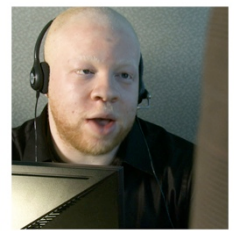
*A program of the National
Institutes of Health*



Is Vision Loss Part of Getting Older?

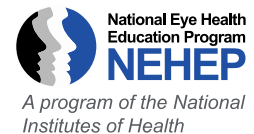
- Vision can change as we age.
- Vision loss and blindness are not a normal part of aging.

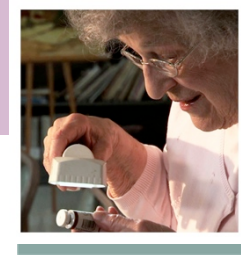
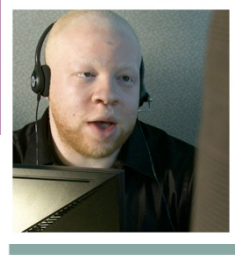




What Vision Changes Are Normal?

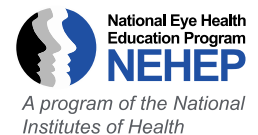
- Focusing on objects up close is harder to do.
- Noticing declining sensitivity.
- Needing more light to see well.
- Needing more time to adjust to changing levels of light.

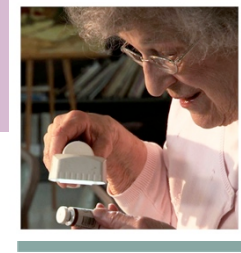
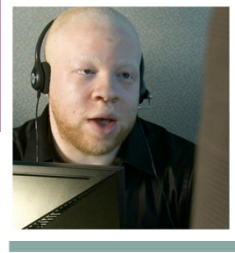




What Is Low Vision?

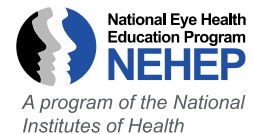
- Vision that is not corrected by eyeglasses, contact lenses, medication, or surgery.
- Low vision may make everyday tasks difficult to do.

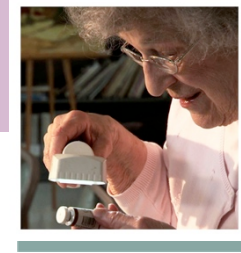
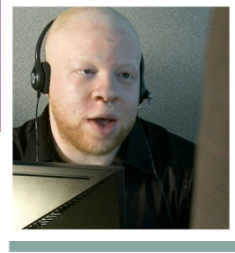




What Causes Low Vision?

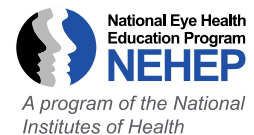
- Sometimes vision loss occurs because of eye injuries or birth defects.
- Most people develop low vision because of the following:
 - Age-related macular degeneration
 - Cataract
 - Diabetic eye disease
 - Glaucoma

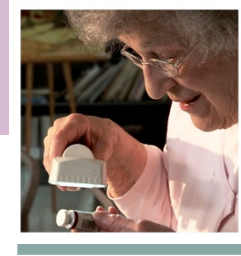
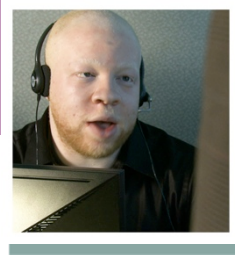




Signs of Low Vision

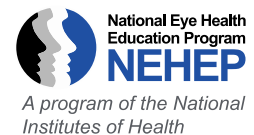
- Even with your regular glasses or contact lenses, you have difficulty with the following:
 - Recognizing familiar faces.
 - Reading.
 - Cooking.
 - Picking out and matching the color of your clothes.
 - Reading street signs.

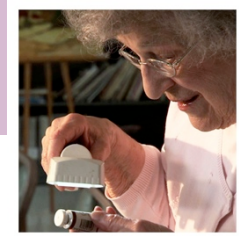
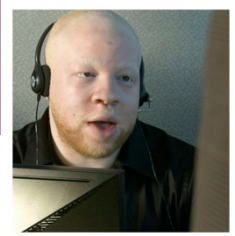




How Do You Know When To Get an Eye Exam?

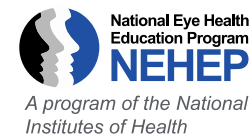
- When you experience vision changes.
- Make it part of your routine health care:
 - People aged 50 or older should have a comprehensive dilated eye exam.

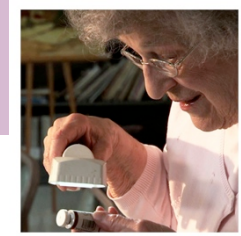
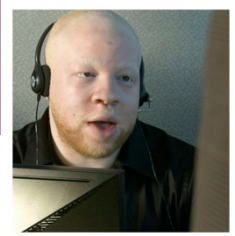




How Do You Know if You Have Low Vision?

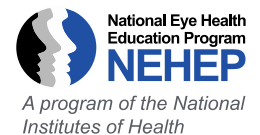
- Only an eye care professional can tell if you have low vision.



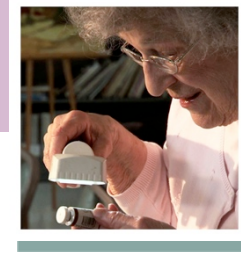
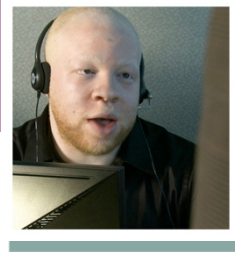


What Is a Low Vision Assessment?

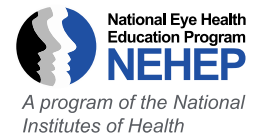
- A low vision assessment determines the extent of vision loss and potential for vision rehabilitation.

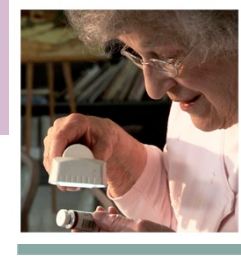
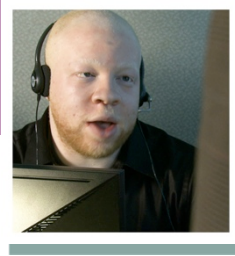


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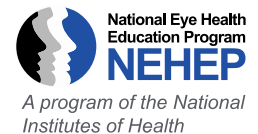
- The specialist in low vision will assess the following:
 - Your general health and eye health history.
 - Functions of daily living related to your vision.
 - Your visual acuity and other eye functions.

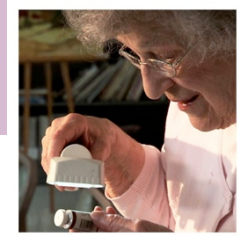
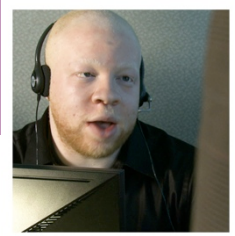




What Can You Do if You Have Low Vision?

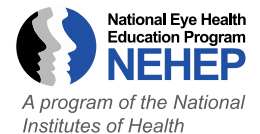
- Take charge.
- Visit your eye care professional or a specialist in low vision.
- Ask about vision rehabilitation.
- Learn about low vision devices and services.

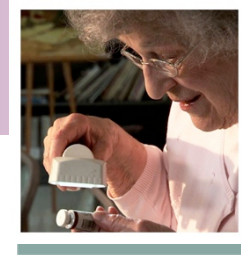
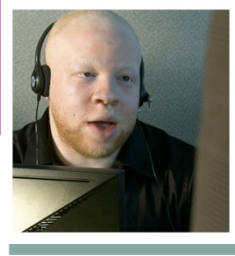




Vision Rehabilitation

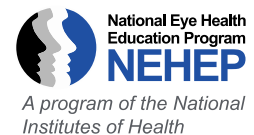
- Offers information about devices and services.
- Helps people adapt to vision loss and maintain their independence.



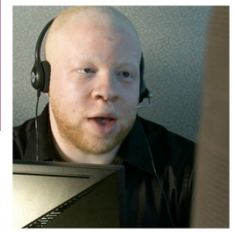


Low Vision Devices

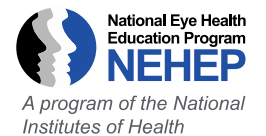
- Many people require more than one visual device. Some examples of devices are listed below:
 - Glasses
 - Telescopic lenses
 - Special software for computers
 - Other devices



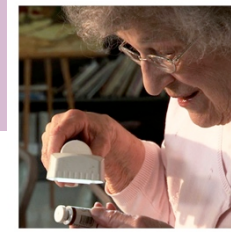
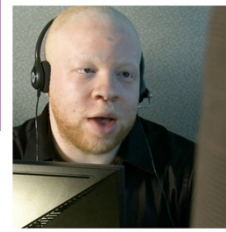
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- Glasses with high-powered lenses



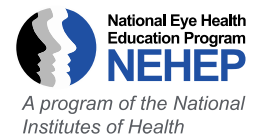
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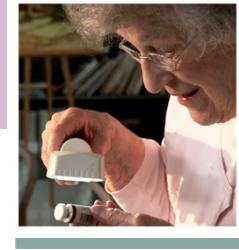
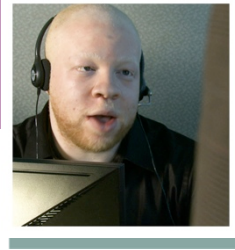
■ Telescopic lenses



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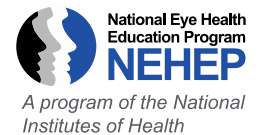
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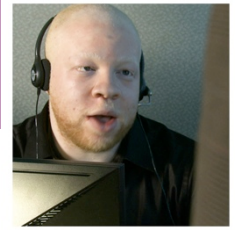
- Special software for computers



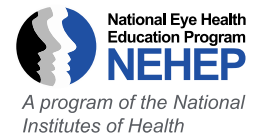
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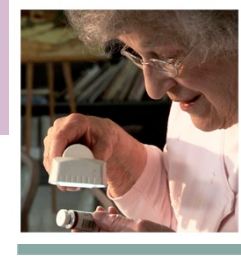
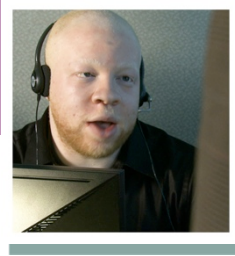


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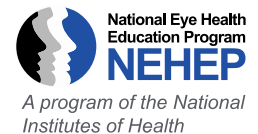
- Other devices

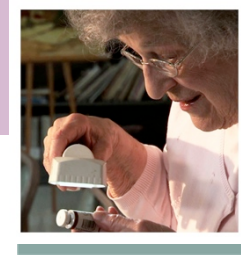
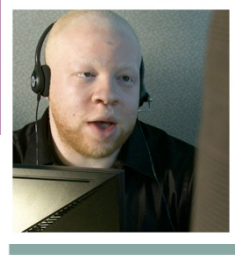




Where Can You Go for Services?

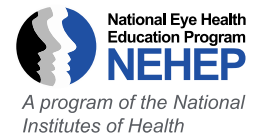
- Ophthalmology or optometry offices that specialize in low vision.
- Hospital clinics.
- State, nonprofit, or for-profit vision rehabilitation organizations.
- Independent-living centers.

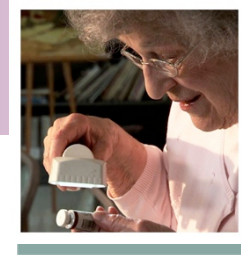
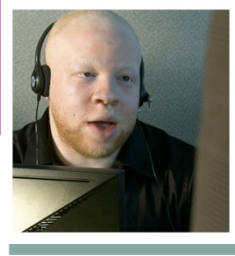




How Can You Find a Specialist?

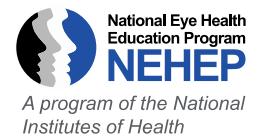
- Talk with your eye care professional about local resources.
- Visit www.nei.nih.gov/lowvision



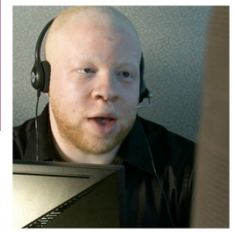


Be Your Best Health Advocate

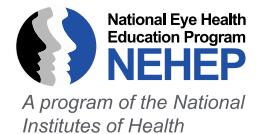
- Investigate and learn as much as you can.
- Ask questions about vision rehabilitation, and ask for a referral for care or a resource for more information.

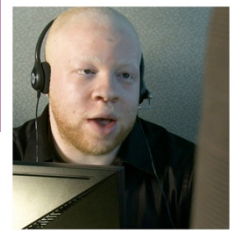


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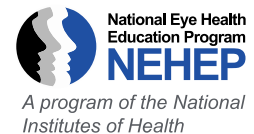
- Learn about low vision programs, devices, and technology.
- Get support from family and friends.
- Establish a good relationship with your eye care professional and specialist in low vision.



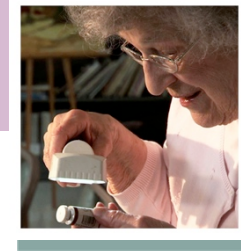
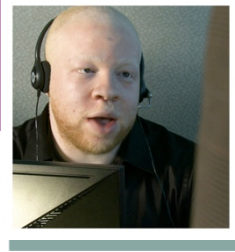


Questions To Ask Your Eye Care Professional

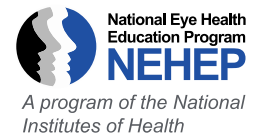
- What changes can I expect in my vision?
- Will my vision loss get worse?
- How much of my vision will I lose?
- Will regular eyeglasses improve my vision?
- What can I do to protect my vision?

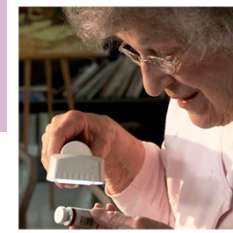
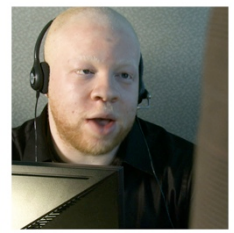


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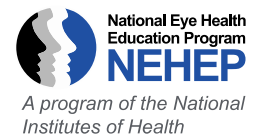
- Will diet, exercise, or lifestyle changes help?
- If my vision can't be corrected, can you refer me to a specialist in low vision?
- Where can I get a low vision assessment?
- Where can I get vision rehabilitation?



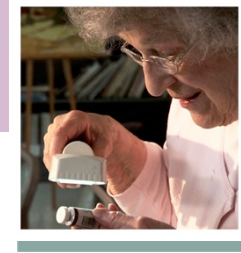
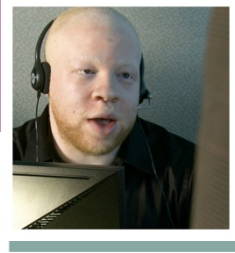


Questions To Ask Your Specialist in Low Vision

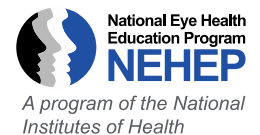
- How can I continue my daily activities?
- Are there resources to help me in my job?
- Will any special devices help me with daily activities around the house?

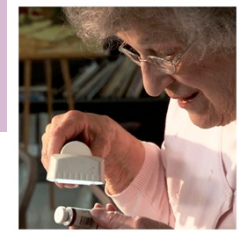
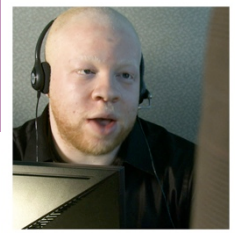


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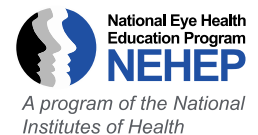
- What training and services are available to help me live better and more safely?
- Where can I find support to cope with my vision loss?

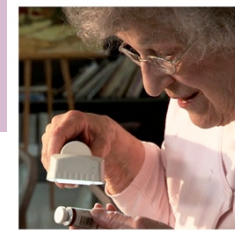
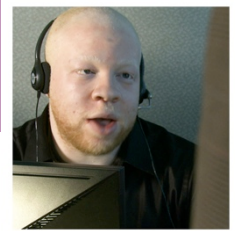




Review

- Low vision is vision that cannot be corrected.
- People with low vision can make the most of the vision they have.
- It pays to be proactive. Learn about vision rehabilitation services.
- Questions?





Where To Get More Information

National Eye Institute (NEI)

For more information, visit
www.nei.nih.gov/lowvision

Or call NEI at 301-496-5248

