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Myths, Misunderstandings & Visual Impairment

♦ **Myth: Loosing vision is part of getting older.**

Fact: While some normal changes in vision occur as we get older, these changes do not lead to visual impairment or low vision. Low vision results from eye diseases such as macular degeneration, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.

♦ **Myth: Because your eyes tire when reading you must stop reading as this will make your vision worse.**

Fact: You cannot damage your vision by using your eyes, nor can you preserve your vision by not using your eyes. You cannot wear them out.

♦ **Myth: Decreased vision will lead to a loss of independence.**

Fact: Decreased visual acuity does not have to lead to a loss of independence. Never assume you cannot perform a task because of your vision loss. Often simple changes in the home along with the use of low vision glasses and products and proper organization will allow the person live as they had been living.

♦ **Myth: Sitting close to the television will harm your eyes**

Fact: There is no evidence that sitting close to the television will damage your eyes. Sit wherever you are most comfortable and where you can see the TV the best. Even sitting one foot in front of the TV will not harm your eyes.

♦ **Myth: Eye exercises will improve my vision.**

Fact: While eye exercises may help improve binocularity or how the eyes work together, they will not improve your vision. Rolling your eyes around or up and down has no effect on your vision.

♦ **Myth: All magnifiers are the same I have tried them in the past and they do not work for my eye disease.**

Fact: The biggest cause of failure when using low vision products such as magnifiers is using the wrong power. Not all magnifiers are the same. Similar to wearing a friends eye glasses, you cannot see with eyeglasses in the wrong prescription or a magnifier in the wrong prescription. Do not buy your magnifiers or reading glasses at the drug store, or off the internet. To ensure your success, have your eye doctor prescribe the correct magnifier type and power for reading or for a specific task.

♦ **Myth: The larger the magnifier lens, the stronger the magnifier.**

Fact: In fact, the opposite is true. The stronger the magnifier power, the smaller the lens. As a lens is made stronger, the lens becomes more curved adding increased peripheral lens distortion. The lens must then be made smaller to eliminate some of this distortion.

♦ **Myth: Reading in dim light will damage your vision.**

Fact: Reading in dim light can make your eyes feel tired. It is not harmful and cannot damage your vision. However, most people who are visually impaired need increased lighting to see clearly as this increases the contrast of text. Use good direct illumination from a goose neck lamp when reading to increase task light without causing glare. Light bulbs that mimic daylight are preferred as they result in the most contrast enhancement.

♦ **Myth: My eye doctor said I am legally blind. There is no hope, I am blind and nothing will help me see.**

Fact: The United States Government has defined the term Legal Blindness as a visual acuity of worse than 20/100- in the better seeing eye with best correction (eyeglasses, contact lenses) or a visual field of 20 degrees or less in its widest diameter. Most states have adopted this definition to provide benefits to those individuals whose vision falls within these categories.

The term Legal Blindness is a term used for legal purposes only, it is not a functional term. It does not mean that a legally blind person is blind or has no usable vision. Most people defined as legally blind have usable vision and can perform most daily tasks with the use of special glasses, low vision products and vision rehabilitation. In fact many people who are defined as legally blind are able to drive, go to school and work.

Some of the benefits for legally blind individuals are as follows:

An IRS income tax exemption. The #907 Tax Information for Handicapped and Disabled Individuals publication is available from the IRS.

Free Telephone Directory Assistance

This is available from nearly all telephone Companies.

Transportation benefits

Available from many sources. Please contact ViewFinder for a list of sources.

Free Library Services. This service provides books, magazines and newspapers in large print or on cassette tapes. These materials are sent free through the mail to the individual's home.

US Veterans Low Vision Services

Full-spectrum rehabilitation services are available for some legally blind veterans.

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Our doctors also see patients at several satellite offices throughout the state of Arizona. Please call our toll free number 866.924.8755 or 480.924.8755 to schedule an appointment at one of these offices.

www.ViewFinderLowVision.com

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