Eye Health Self-Management Plan

- ❑ Get an annual eye exam per your Primary Care Physician's orders
- ❑ Know your family eye health history
- ❑ Eat right to protect your sight
- ❑ Maintain a healthy weight
- ❑ Wear protective eyewear when gardening, playing sports, or using household chemicals

- ❑ Don't smoke
- ❑ Reduce eye strain by limiting computer use
- ❑ Wash your hands thoroughly
- ❑ Avoid rubbing or touching your eyes
- ❑ Wear sunglasses to protect eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays

Green Flags — All Clear

What this means …

If you have:
- No eye pain
- Clear vision

- Good work!
- Your symptoms are under control

Keep up the good work!

Yellow Flags — Caution

What this means …

If you have:
- Red, dry, itchy, irritated, burning and/or tearing eyes
- Blurry or cloudy vision
- Bump or spot (white, red, yellow, or brown) along the inner eyelid
- Whites of your eyes turn yellow
- A small blind spot in your vision
- Shimmering lights or wavy lines in your vision
- Disappearing eyebrows
- Seeing halos around lights
- White of your eye turns red
- Thick green or white discharge
- Difficulty closing one eye

You may have:
- Allergies
- Computer vision syndrome
- A *stye* (bump) caused by a bacterial infection
- A *chalazia* (small lump)
- High cholesterol
- Jaundice
- Cataracts
- Over- or under-active thyroid gland
- A liver condition
- Ocular migraine
- Bell's palsy

Call your doctor, consulting nurse, or health care provider if symptoms do not improve.

Name:

Number:

Instructions:

If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.

Red Flags — Stop and Think

What this means …

If you have:
- Sudden vision loss in one or both eyes
- Sudden pain in your eye
- Sudden double vision
- Eye injury

You need to be evaluated by a health care professional immediately.

If possible, notify your health care provider's office.

Name:

Number:

Follow these instructions: CALL 9-1-1

If you notice a Red Flag, CALL 911. Emergency!

Eye Health Fast Facts

- We "see" with our brains, and our eyes take in visual information. Eyes are a complex part of the body and there are more than 2 million working parts in your eyes.
- The older you are, the less tears you produce and so you may experience dry eyes, which is a common condition when your tears can't provide adequate lubrication.
- **Macular degeneration-**caused by a deterioration of the retina and can severely impact vision. There is no cure. There is a "dry" form, caused by yellow deposits in the macula and a "wet" form, a growth of abnormal blood vessels underneath the macula. The blood vessels leak blood and fluid into the retina causing a distortion of vision.
- **Cataracts-**a clouding of the lens in the eye that affects vision and most of them are related to aging. By age 80, more than half of all Americans either have a cataract or have had cataract surgery. Smoking and diabetes contribute to the development of cataract.
- **Diabetic retinopathy-**caused by progressive damage to the blood vessels of the retina.
- **Glaucoma-**a group of diseases that can damage the eye's optic nerve and result in vision loss or blindness.
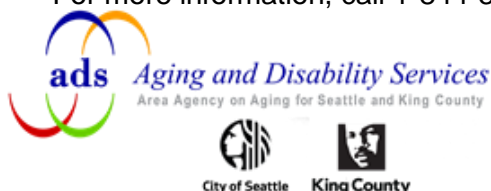
What can you do?
- Think about eye health as a part of your overall health routine.
- Have a comprehensive dilated eye exam. A dilated eye exam is the only way to detect many common eye diseases such as glaucoma, diabetic eye disease and age-related macular degeneration in their early stages.
- If you have dry eyes, talk with your eye health care provider
- If you smoke, consider quitting. Smoking is bad for your eyes and the rest of your body. Research has linked smoking to an increased risk of developing age-related macular degeneration, cataract, and optic nerve damage which can lead to blindness.
- If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar under control.
- If you have high blood pressure, keep your blood pressure under control.
- Follow a healthy diet. Include fruits and vegetables. Include fish high in Omega-3 fatty acids like salmon, tuna, and halibut.
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Look for glasses that block out 99-100 percent of both UV-A and UV-B radiation.
- Give your eyes a rest, particularly if you sit at a computer for long periods of time. Think about the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes look away about 20 feet in front of you for about 20 seconds. This can help reduce eyestrain.
- Wash your hands! This helps reduce the risk of eye infections.

Aging and Disability Services

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for King County— plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County.

For more information, call 1-844-348-5464 or e-mail info@communitylivingconnections.org

www.agingkingcounty.org