

# Lions LSU Low Vision Center



**Making a difference in peoples' lives.**

*While research continues at LSU Eye Center to advance the fight against blinding eye diseases, many patients with visual impairment, or "low vision", need help now to make the best use of their remaining vision and to maintain independent lifestyles.*

*There is hope.*

*We can help*

*How to contact us*

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## Low Vision Center Update

As we approach the 2 year anniversary of the Lions LSU Low Vision Center we would like to thank Louisiana Lions Eye Foundation, LCIF, and the individual Lions Clubs for their generosity and commitment to making this program a success. We have been able to help many visually impaired individuals continue to enjoy a better quality of life.

We are pleased to announce that in conjunction with LSU School of Allied Health Occupational Therapy department, we have established a Low Vision training center. This training facility, located in the Allied Health Building on Gravier Street is furnished with

many of the newest low vision devices available. This space will make the training sessions more beneficial for the patient. It will allow us to better serve our patients as well as train more occupational therapists to work with low vision patients.

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**Mark your calendars for the 2nd Annual Low Vision Gala to be held Friday, September 19, 2008 at Natalie Fine Art in the French Quarter. More information will be coming soon.**

## Live Independently and Avoid Falling

A CDC study found that 1.8 million elderly not living in nursing homes reported difficulty with bathing, dressing and walking around the house in part because of a visual impairment.

### Falling is the leading cause of death among people 65 and older

Low vision or blindness affects approximately 1 in 28 Americans over the age of 40, and the risk of low vision and blindness increases significantly with age—especially among people over 65.

### **Low Vision is a Growing Trend**

Today, 6.5 million Americans over age 65 have a severe visual impairment, and experts predict that by 2030 the rate of severe vision loss will double along with the country's aging population.

Low vision can have profound and adverse effects on the overall health and well-being of older adults such as a greater risk of depression, drug-related errors caused by an inability to identify medications, and an increased risk of falls and fractures.

### **Low Vision Increases Risk of Falls and Fractures**

Falls are the leading cause of death among people 65 and older, and people with low vision are at even greater risk of falls or fractures, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control.

The CDC study found that 1.8 million elderly not living in nursing homes reported difficulty with bathing, dressing and walking around the house in part because of a visual impairment. However, fewer than 2 percent reported using assistive equipment such as telescopic lenses and canes, which could improve their safety.

### **Preventing Falls and Other Injuries Related to Low Vision**

In 2003, falls among older adults accounted for 12,900 deaths, 1.8 million emergency department visits, and 421,000 hospitalizations—but many falls can be prevented.

### **Safety Tips for People with Low Vision**

To help people with low vision perform everyday tasks more easily while reducing their risk of falls and other injuries, the American Foundation for the Blind offers several useful tips:

1. Keep rooms well lit. Good overall lighting is a must for safety.
2. Use task lighting to make everyday activities easier.
3. Use night lights in bedrooms, hallways, bathrooms, and the kitchen to make it easier for people with low vision to navigate in the dark.
4. Make stairways safer by placing a brightly colored strip of tape along the edge of each step.
5. Make door frames and light switches easier to see by painting them a color that contrasts with the walls around them.
6. Cut light-colored items on a dark cutting board and dark items on a light cutting board. [Some companies now sell cutting boards that are white on one side and black on the other.]
7. Place plates and food service items on placemats that are a contrasting color.
8. Use pill organizers with raised markings or talking labels to help prevent serious medication mishaps.
9. Eliminate clutter—dispose of unnecessary items, put things away as soon as you have finished using them, and always return them to the same place.
10. Reposition television sets so that neither sunlight nor lamplight shines directly on the screen.



## Low Vision Products for Near Tasks

Low vision eyeglasses are the most commonly prescribed low vision aid. Patients often arrive at their low vision eye examination believing that they have the strongest bifocals or reading eyeglasses available and that new glasses will not help. Special reading glasses and bifocal lenses can be made up to 20X power. Rarely do patients need that much power for reading. If you can see print through a magnifier, reading glasses can be made to help you read.

### Advantages of low vision reading glasses

- Hands-free to hold reading material
- Widest field of view this will help with speed reading
- Cosmetically acceptable resembles regular glasses
- Good for prolonged reading

## Hand and Stand Magnifiers

Magnifiers come in many styles and powers, and are useful for reading or performing other near tasks. It is common to hear patients say that they have tried magnifiers in the past and that they simply do not work. Using the wrong power magnifier is similar to wearing the wrong prescription in your eyeglasses, you will not see clearly. A good selection of magnifiers can only be found in a low vision resource center or at a low vision eye doctor's office. Here the correct power magnifier needed to perform a task is determined and the patient is taught how to use the magnifier correctly. Keep in mind, the stronger the magnifier, the smaller the lens of the magnifier. To read easily and with greater speed, most magnifiers should be held close to the eye. Most people with low vision need good direct light when reading. Therefore, an illuminated magnifier is a good choice.



**Lions LSU Low Vision Center**

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*There is hope.  
We can help.*

**We need your help!**

The Lions LSU Low Vision Center is made possible by a generous grant from Lions Clubs International Foundation. This has allowed us to provide low vision care to patients who otherwise would not have been able to afford it. This funding will not last indefinitely. We need your help to continue providing this much needed service. Please consider making a donation to the Lions LSU Low Vision Center.

*I would like to make a donation to the  
Lions LSU Low Vision Center.*

*I would like to donate:*

\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_ \$500 \_\_\_ \$1000 \_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Please send donations to:*

*Louisiana Lions Eye Foundation*

*Low Vision Program*

*2020 Gravier St*

*New Orleans LA 70112*