

Third Annual American Optometric Association American Eye-Q® Survey Executive Summary

The American Optometric Association's (AOA) annual American Eye-Q® survey identifies attitudes and behaviors of Americans regarding eye care. The 2008 survey revealed that many Americans are not paying enough attention to their eyesight and overall eye health. In fact, according to the survey, most Americans – 81 percent of respondents – use some form of vision correction; however, one in four have not visited an eye doctor or eye care specialist within the past two years.

The following key findings were also included within the American Eye-Q® press release.

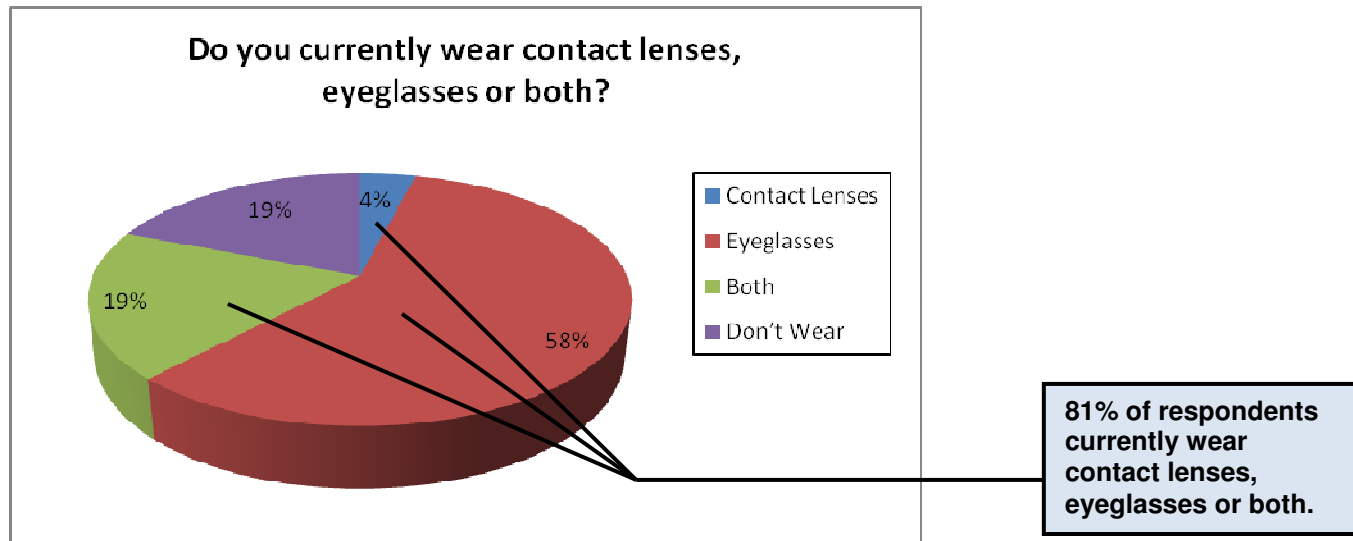
NOTE:

- The AOA survey defines two types of respondents:
 - Users: People who wear corrective lenses and/or have had eye surgery
 - Non-Users: Those who do not wear corrective lenses and have not had eye surgery
- Be advised that some statistics may not total 100%; this is due to rounding

General Questions:

➢ **Do you currently wear contact lenses, eyeglasses or both?**

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Contact Lenses	4%	5%	3%	5%	0%	5%	2%	1%	11%	5%	1%	3%	1%
Eyeglasses	57%	60%	55%	72%	0%	58%	61%	53%	29%	36%	62%	68%	86%
Both	19%	16%	21%	23%	0%	17%	14%	30%	32%	34%	12%	11%	7%
Don't Wear	19%	18%	21%	0%	100%	20%	24%	16%	28%	26%	25%	18%	6%



➤ **When was the last time you personally used the services of an eye doctor or eye care specialist?**

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Within the past year	54%	58%	50%	61%	25%	53%	54%	61%	56%	58%	44%	50%	60%
Within the past two years	20%	17%	23%	21%	16%	21%	17%	18%	18%	14%	25%	23%	20%
Within the past three to four years	11%	11%	11%	11%	13%	11%	10%	10%	8%	9%	13%	15%	12%
Five or more years ago	11%	10%	11%	6%	28%	11%	10%	8%	11%	13%	13%	8%	8%
Never	3%	3%	3%	0%	15%	3%	9%	1%	4%	6%	3%	3%	0%
Don't Know	1%	1%	2%	1%	4%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	0%

60% of non-users have not visited an eye doctor or other eye care specialist within the past two years, as recommended by the AOA.

➤ **Which of the following conditions do you think can be detected through a comprehensive eye exam?**

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Diabetes	38%	34%	41%	40%	29%	36%	43%	41%	31%	36%	40%	41%	41%
Hypertension	29%	28%	30%	32%	19%	29%	36%	22%	26%	26%	28%	35%	32%
Brain tumor	25%	24%	27%	26%	24%	25%	30%	21%	21%	25%	28%	33%	24%
Cardiovascular disease	20%	20%	21%	22%	16%	21%	20%	17%	17%	17%	20%	25%	24%
Cancer	22%	21%	23%	23%	20%	23%	24%	20%	24%	25%	21%	24%	20%
Multiple sclerosis	10%	11%	10%	10%	13%	10%	10%	11%	12%	11%	10%	10%	10%
None of the above	14%	16%	13%	13%	20%	14%	17%	11%	18%	17%	13%	9%	12%
Don't know	32%	33%	31%	31%	37%	33%	28%	32%	34%	29%	31%	28%	35%

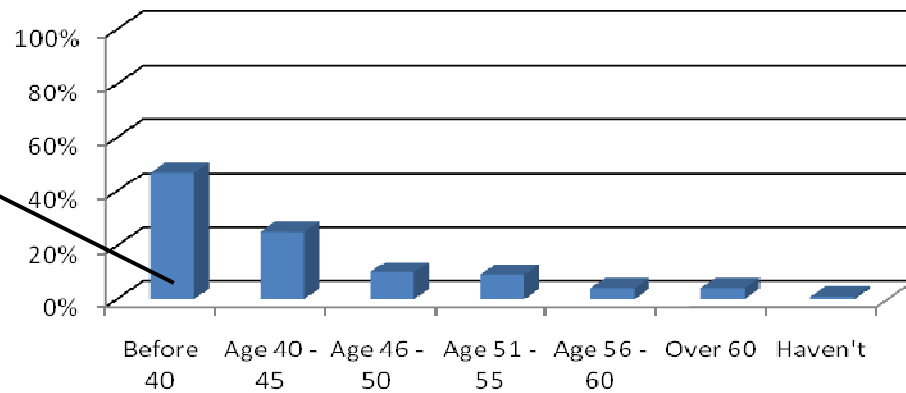
1 in 3 respondents are not aware that chronic and systemic diseases can be detected during a comprehensive eye exam.

Aging Eyes (Asked only those age 55 and older):

➤ **At what age, if at all, did you begin noticing changes in your vision?**

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Before 40	47%	46%	48%	48%	18%	47%	39%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	47%
Age 40 - 45	25%	26%	23%	27%	0%	25%	24%	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%
Age 46 - 50	10%	9%	13%	9%	24%	10%	9%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Age 51 - 55	9%	10%	7%	9%	6%	8%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%
Age 56 - 60	4%	3%	6%	3%	12%	3%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Over the age of 60	4%	5%	3%	3%	29%	4%	3%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Haven't noticed any changes	1%	2%	0%	0%	12%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%

At what age, if at all, did you begin noticing changes in your vision?



The majority of respondents began noticing vision changes before age 40.

➤ Which of the following would concern you the most about developing serious age-related vision problems?

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Losing the ability to drive	23%	28%	11%	22%	24%	24%	18%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	23%
Being unable to live independently	48%	45%	55%	49%	35%	45%	61%	70%	0%	0%	0%	0%	48%
Not being able to watch television	3%	3%	1%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Being unable to read	21%	18%	26%	19%	41%	21%	21%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	21%
Not being able to pursue hobbies	4%	4%	3%	4%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Other	2%	2%	2%	2%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%

Nearly half of all respondents age 55 and older were most concerned with not being able to live independently, if they were to develop a serious age-related vision problem.

➤ What are the effects of macular degeneration?

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Blindness	59%	61%	55%	59%	65%	62%	39%	70%	0%	0%	0%	0%	59%
Increased risk of heart attack	4%	4%	3%	4%	0%	4%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Increased risk of stroke	5%	4%	7%	5%	0%	5%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Hypertension	5%	4%	7%	5%	6%	5%	3%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Diabetes	5%	4%	7%	5%	0%	4%	3%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Don't know	37%	36%	40%	38%	29%	35%	58%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	37%

More than a third of all respondents did not know the effects of macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in the United States. The effects include blindness, increased risk of heart attack and stroke, hypertension, and diabetes.

➤ **As a person ages what types of changes would one be likely to experience with their eyes or vision?**

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Dry eyes	57%	52%	69%	59%	29%	56%	52%	90%	0%	0%	0%	0%	57%
Ability to see things close	71%	70%	74%	71%	71%	70%	76%	70%	0%	0%	0%	0%	71%
Ability to see things far	55%	54%	57%	55%	53%	54%	64%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	55%
Light sensitivity	47%	47%	45%	47%	41%	46%	52%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	47%
Color perception	20%	19%	22%	20%	18%	21%	9%	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%
Contact sensitivity	15%	13%	18%	15%	18%	16%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	15%
Don't know	11%	14%	5%	10%	24%	12%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%

The majority of respondents were aware of the more common changes that occur with aging eyes; however, many were unaware that other changes are likely to occur including, color perception and sensitivity to contact lenses.

➤ **Which of the following steps do you take to cope with age-related eye problems?**

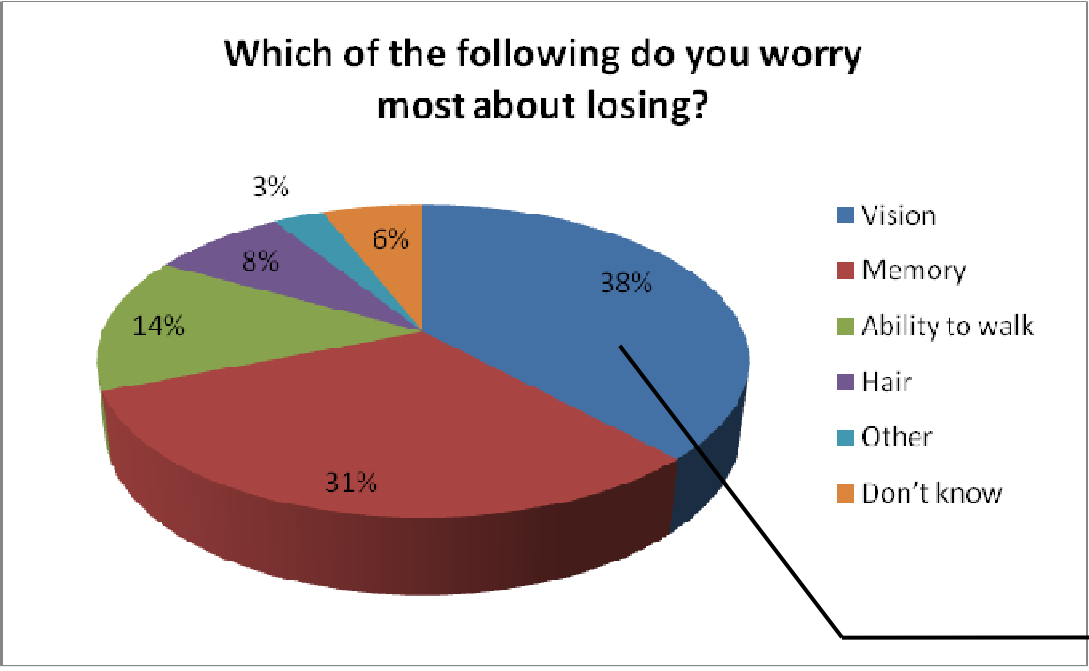
	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Purchase books in larger print	9%	3%	21%	9%	6%	5%	30%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%
Use a reading lamp	21%	18%	28%	20%	35%	19%	39%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	21%
Use wetting eye drops	27%	23%	34%	27%	24%	26%	39%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%
Use a humidifier	5%	4%	9%	5%	6%	5%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Increase nutrients/vitamins	29%	24%	40%	29%	41%	29%	36%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%
Limit night driving	28%	23%	39%	29%	12%	26%	36%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	28%
Schedule frequent exams	60%	58%	63%	60%	59%	59%	67%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	60%
Other	3%	3%	3%	3%	6%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
None of the above	15%	19%	7%	15%	18%	16%	9%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	15%

Even though there are many things Americans can do to cope with age-related eye problems, nearly 20% of males are not taking any measures to help them manage age-related eye problems. Women are being much more proactive in coping with eye problems; in fact 93% are taking steps to help them deal with aging eye conditions.

Common Misconceptions and Other Findings:

➤ **Which of the following do you worry most about losing?**

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Vision	38%	40%	36%	42%	23%	37%	42%	42%	38%	35%	37%	36%	42%
Memory	31%	28%	34%	31%	33%	32%	26%	33%	27%	34%	31%	32%	32%
Ability to walk	14%	14%	13%	13%	18%	14%	17%	10%	11%	13%	13%	16%	17%
Hair	8%	8%	8%	6%	14%	8%	9%	7%	15%	9%	8%	7%	3%
Other	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	4%	6%	4%
Don't know	6%	6%	5%	5%	9%	6%	4%	5%	8%	7%	7%	2%	3%



More respondents were worried about losing their vision (38%) than their memory (31%).

➤ Which of the following behaviors are bad for your eyes?

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Reading under dim lights	71%	66%	75%	71%	69%	70%	80%	67%	66%	74%	73%	73%	69%
Sitting too close to a TV	66%	61%	70%	66%	65%	63%	82%	65%	71%	72%	65%	60%	60%
Smoking cigarettes	51%	54%	49%	53%	44%	54%	44%	40%	46%	44%	44%	57%	63%
Rubbing eyes	48%	46%	50%	48%	47%	49%	51%	42%	45%	50%	49%	48%	48%
Drinking alcohol	28%	34%	23%	30%	22%	31%	26%	19%	29%	27%	25%	28%	33%
Drinking caffeine	15%	15%	16%	15%	17%	17%	14%	7%	22%	19%	13%	13%	12%
Crying	5%	6%	4%	5%	5%	6%	2%	6%	10%	8%	5%	1%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%
None of the above	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	0%	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%	3%
Don't know	9%	11%	7%	8%	13%	9%	7%	10%	11%	8%	9%	8%	10%

Habits and behaviors that can be most harmful to the eyes are not widely understood. More than half of all respondents believe that reading under dim lights and sitting too close to a TV are behaviors that will harm one's vision; when in fact, behaviors like smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol and caffeine in excess are those that can actually cause damage to the eye.

➤ Which of the following foods is best for your eye health?

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Carrots	48%	44%	52%	45%	58%	47%	55%	49%	54%	55%	49%	48%	38%
Broccoli	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	3%	1%	3%	4%	2%	2%	1%
Spinach	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	1%
Apples	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%	2%	5%	2%	0%	0%	0%
All equally good	40%	40%	40%	42%	30%	40%	38%	40%	26%	36%	41%	43%	51%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
None of the above	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Don't know	6%	9%	4%	6%	8%	7%	2%	5%	10%	2%	6%	3%	8%

Nearly 50% of respondents incorrectly believed that carrots are the best food for eye health. The correct answer is spinach, which was only known by 2% of respondents.

Fun Facts:

➤ **What personal feature do you get the most compliments on?**

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Eyes	32%	29%	35%	32%	34%	32%	20%	41%	38%	37%	35%	36%	21%
Lips/smile	20%	19%	22%	20%	21%	18%	30%	23%	25%	19%	22%	16%	19%
Skin	6%	5%	7%	7%	5%	5%	15%	5%	7%	8%	4%	7%	6%
Hair	20%	15%	24%	21%	15%	21%	17%	19%	13%	20%	20%	26%	22%
Other	6%	7%	5%	6%	7%	6%	6%	3%	6%	6%	5%	3%	8%
Don't know	15%	24%	7%	15%	19%	17%	12%	9%	11%	10%	15%	11%	24%

Both males and females noted that they receive the most compliments on their eyes, when compared to other personal features.

➤ **What do you think is the best feature about your eyes?**

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Color	42%	36%	47%	42%	40%	47%	24%	28%	42%	49%	43%	47%	34%
Eye lashes	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	12%	12%	11%	7%	7%	5%
Size or shape	12%	8%	16%	12%	10%	9%	23%	18%	15%	13%	14%	16%	6%
Vision	26%	33%	20%	26%	27%	25%	31%	30%	24%	18%	24%	24%	36%
Other	2%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	2%
Don't know	10%	14%	6%	10%	12%	9%	13%	11%	5%	8%	10%	6%	17%

Just over a quarter of respondents believed that their vision was the best feature about their eyes.

Other Survey Findings (Not included within the news release):

➤ **Do you wear protective eye wear when playing contact sports competitively or recreationally?**

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Yes	31%	36%	26%	33%	23%	31%	24%	41%	41%	32%	31%	31%	24%
No	69%	64%	74%	67%	77%	69%	76%	59%	59%	68%	69%	69%	76%

Nearly 7 in 10 respondents do not wear protective eye wear when participating in contact sports.

➤ **When did your child(ren) first receive a comprehensive eye exam?**

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Within the first year of life	13%	14%	13%	13%	14%	13%	22%	10%	22%	12%	11%	18%	3%
Between age 1 – 2	12%	17%	10%	12%	13%	13%	12%	9%	12%	12%	10%	14%	21%
Between age 3 - 4	19%	19%	20%	21%	15%	19%	30%	14%	15%	24%	18%	23%	14%
Age 5 or older	38%	36%	38%	40%	30%	38%	28%	43%	20%	38%	47%	41%	48%
Never	13%	9%	15%	11%	21%	13%	6%	18%	26%	12%	8%	5%	7%
Don't Know	5%	6%	4%	4%	7%	5%	2%	5%	6%	3%	6%	0%	7%

More than 8 in 10 children are not receiving their first eye exam within their first year of life, as recommended by the AOA.

➤ **Do you purchase sunglasses for your children?**

	Total	Male	Female	Users	Non-Users	Caucasians	African Americans	Hispanics	Age 18 – 29	Age 30 – 39	Age 40 – 49	Age 50 - 54	Age 55 & up
Yes	67%	64%	68%	68%	64%	69%	56%	65%	62%	69%	68%	73%	62%
No	33%	35%	32%	32%	36%	30%	44%	34%	38%	30%	33%	27%	38%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

A third of parents do not purchase sunglasses for their children. This is particularly distressing since the eyes are highly susceptible to permanent damage from UV rays early in life.

Media Inquires: Please contact Emily Krone at (312) 255-3090 or emily.krone@hillandknowlton.com.

About the American Eye-Q® survey: The third annual American Eye-Q® survey was created and commissioned in conjunction with Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates (PSB). From May 17-19, 2008, using an online methodology, PSB interviewed 1,001 Americans 18 years and older who embodied a nationally representative sample of U.S. general population. (Margin of error at 95 percent confidence level.)