



The Low Down on Low Vision

Many seniors over the age of 65 must deal with low vision – a steady decline in vision that therapy or aids cannot help. You might be familiar with a few of the major culprits of aging low vision – macular degeneration and glaucoma to name a few. However, you might be surprised at how much low vision issues can drastically affect the everyday quality of life for your loved one, and how life changes for family members and friends.

If your family member has been diagnosed with low vision, it is important to be prepared for the emotional and physical changes that can occur. Here are a few of our tips to remember when low vision hits home.

Low vision doesn't just affect the patient.

A diagnosis of low vision does not just affect the patient. Everyone learns new habits and adaptations together. Someone in the family or support team might need to start driving the patient more at nighttime or during the day. The patient might need help with dispensing the correct medication, or doing regular daily chores like laundry or cooking dinner.

Spouses of low vision patients can end up acting as caregivers, which can put them at risk for burnout or unhealthy choices of their own. Members of the family, and friends, should be sure to check in on the spouse and give them a respite from care often.

Low vision affects quality of life.

Even though a low vision diagnosis isn't as medically threatening as a heart attack, cancer, or a broken hip, there are plenty of implications on the patient's quality of life. Patients tend to isolate themselves from their friends or social circles; either the patient cannot drive themselves to social events, or the patient is embarrassed that he cannot eat or play cards without adaptations. Isolation is never good, especially for seniors, and can lead to



decreased cognition and increased depression.

Patients also find out that “normal” tasks require more assistive devices, and might take longer than before. This adjustment can lead to depression or to the desire to cut out these daily activities all together. Bathing and other hygiene tasks can decrease, and skipping cooking meals can lead to eating unbalanced meals or snacks.

You cannot do this alone.

Whether you are the person who is diagnosed, or are a part of the support team, you cannot deal with a low vision diagnosis on your own. Finding support through your local hospital, ophthalmologist, or low vision center is key to learning how to navigate these blurry waters. You can learn about helpful adaptations from magnifiers to books on tape to lifestyle changes.

Finally, if your loved one is dealing with low vision without a support team that is nearby and available, finding caring and knowledgeable help is key. Here at [Visiting Angels Wayzata](#), we can offer your loved one a specialized plan of services that can make their low vision life easier. From medication set up to help in the kitchen, our caregivers are equipped to help with any non-medical needs that will make your loved one’s life easier. Plus, you can take a deep breath knowing that we are on your team.

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