



How does smoking affect my eyes?

Research shows that smoking can increase your chance of damaging your vision. That's because chemicals in tobacco smoke can decrease blood circulation and oxygen flow causing eye problems. Tobacco smoke also causes eyes to become dry and irritated.

What kind of vision problems can smoking cause?

- **Macular degeneration disease/age-related macular degeneration (AMD)**, for which there is no cure, damages your retina, which in turn causes problems reading and in recognizing people's faces. It mostly affects older adults and is a leading cause of blindness.
- **Cataracts**, which cause the eye lens to become cloudy and your vision to blur
- Smokers with diabetes are at higher risk for **retinopathy** — a condition that can cause blindness
- **Dry eye syndrome**, which can cause blurry vision, eye stinging, and contact lens discomfort to you and those around you when you smoke
- **Astigmatism**, unclear vision, in children whose mothers smoked while they were pregnant

How will my visual health benefit if I quit smoking?

Quitting smoking may reduce your risk of:

- Getting AMD or the rate of its progression if you have it
- Getting cataracts
- Developing diabetes and in turn, retinopathy

I want to quit using tobacco — how do I get started?

- Call VA's tobacco quitline at **1-855-QUIT-VET** (1-855-784-8838) Monday–Friday, available in English & Spanish
- Sign up for VA's SmokefreeVET text messaging program—text the word **VET** to **47848** (or **VETesp** to **47848** for Spanish) or visit smokefree.gov/VET
- Talk to your VA primary care provider or optometrist about tobacco cessation medications and counseling that can help you quit
- Visit publichealth.va.gov/smoking