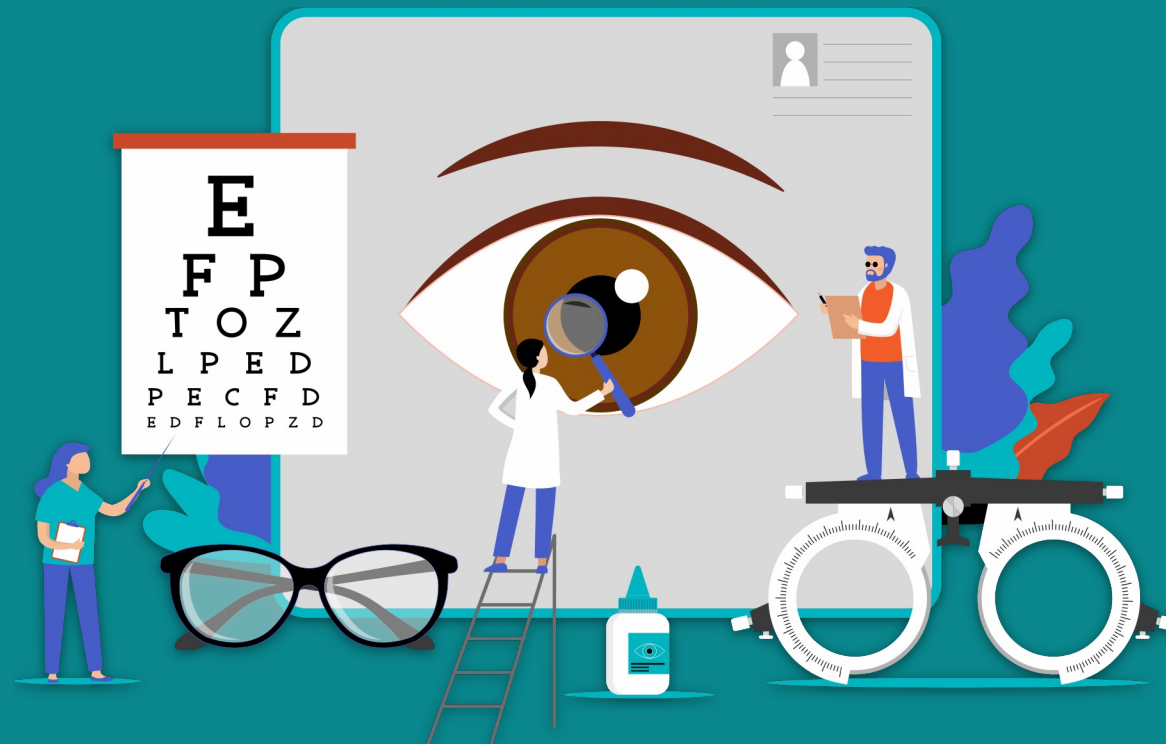


# Supporting Women's Eye Health

**Neelam Gor, MD**  
**Chief Clinical Officer**  
**Versant Health**

June 21, 2023



# Versant Health: A Leading Administrator of Managed Vision Care

- One of the nation's leading administrators of managed vision care, serving more than 39 million of our clients' members nationwide
- Unique visibility and scale - administering vision and eye health solutions that range from access to routine vision benefits to medical management
- We provide access to one of the broadest provider networks in the industry and have an exclusive frame collection
- Commercial groups, employer plans, and health plans that serve government-sponsored programs such as Medicaid and Medicare are among our valued customers



# Gender Disparities in Vision



## There are opportunities for vision care in all of life's stages



# A closer look at women's eye health risks

- **Higher risk** than men for developing diseases such as age-related macular degeneration, thyroid eye disease, and chronic dry eye disease<sup>1</sup>
- Most prevalent eye diseases in women: age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataracts<sup>1</sup>
- In geriatric population, risk of dementia was **2-5X** greater in visually impaired women<sup>2</sup>
- Incidence of eye diseases is expected to **double by 2050**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The roles of sex and gender in women's eye health disparities in the United States, Society for Women's Health Research Women's Eye Health Working Group (Published online 2021 Oct 20. doi: 10.1186/s13293-021-00401-3) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8527306/>

<sup>2</sup>Is Visual Impairment a Risk Factor for Dementia in Women? By Lynda Seminara. Selected and Reviewed By: Neil M. Bressler, MD, and Deputy Editors, Journal Highlights, JAMA Ophthalmology, June 2020

Accessed & retrieved June 2023



## Age-Related Macular Degeneration

Anti-VEGF can help stabilize **90%** of patients with neovascular age-related macular degeneration<sup>3</sup>

## Thyroid Eye Disease

**1 in 8** women will develop it, with increased risk after pregnancy and menopause<sup>4</sup>

## Dry Eye Disease

Women are **2X** more likely than men to develop dry eye disease, costing the healthcare system over **\$3.8M** annually<sup>5</sup>

## Migraines

**43%** incidence among women compared to just 18% among men<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3-6</sup>The roles of sex and gender in women's eye health disparities in the United States, Society for Women's Health Research Women's Eye Health Working Group (Published online 2021 Oct 20). doi: 10.1186/s13293-021-00401-3  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8527306/>

Accessed & retrieved June 2023

# The Impact of Social Pressures on Eye Health

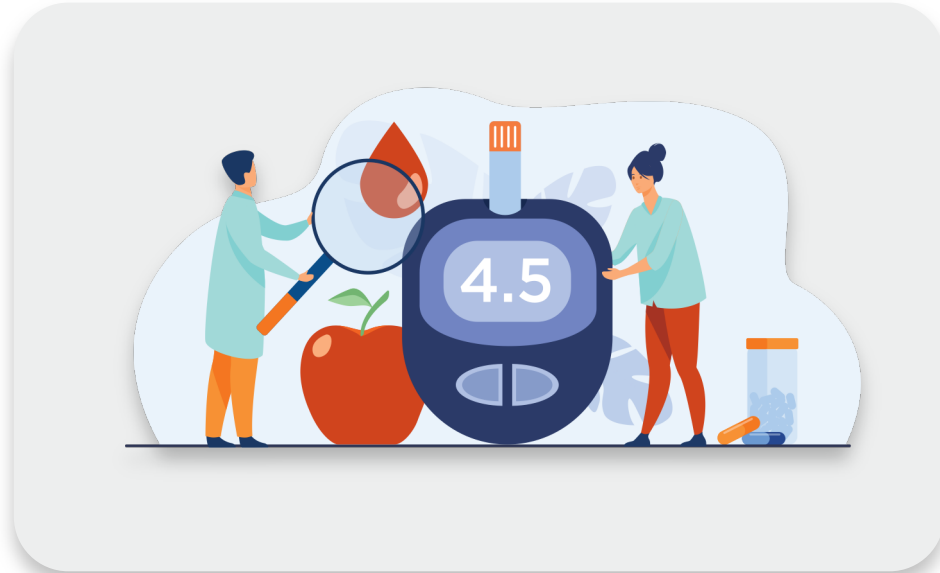


- Use of periocular cosmetics and personal care products<sup>7</sup>
- Permanent makeup / cosmetic tattoos
- Botox injections and dermal fillers
- Under-regulated with substantive unintended consequences
  - Hyperpigmentation
  - Ocular surface disease
  - Contact dermatitis
  - Bacterial infections
  - Dry eye disease

**Contact lenses are more common among women, leading to increased risk in dry eye disease<sup>8</sup>**

<sup>7</sup>Complications and adverse effects of periocular aesthetic treatments, Published: April 28, 2021, DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.survophthal.2021.04.009>, [https://www.surveyophthalmol.com/article/S0039-6257\(21\)00107-7/fulltext](https://www.surveyophthalmol.com/article/S0039-6257(21)00107-7/fulltext)  
<sup>8</sup>Dry Eye Disease: Consideration for Women's Health, Published online 2019 Apr 10. doi: 10.1089/jwh.2018.7041, [https://www.surveyophthalmol.com/article/S0039-6257\(21\)00107-7/fulltext](https://www.surveyophthalmol.com/article/S0039-6257(21)00107-7/fulltext) Accessed & retrieved June 2023

# Sharpened Focus on Early Intervention



A comprehensive eye exam can help in the early diagnosis of many chronic health conditions, including:<sup>9</sup>

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Heart disease
- Thyroid disease
- Diabetes

## Requiring a Dilated Eye

Cataracts  
Diabetic retinopathy  
Glaucoma  
Age-related macular  
degeneration

<sup>9</sup>Mukamal, R., Reviewed by Taylor, R.J. (Apr. 29, 2022). 20 Surprising Health Problems an Eye Exam Can Catch. American Academy of Ophthalmology. Accessed & retrieved Feb. 14, 2023 from <https://bit.ly/3UKDuw7>



# A Closer Look at At-Risk Communities

**Social Determinants of Health (SDOH):  
Understanding how environmental factors can  
impact quality-of-life outcomes and risks**

## Why are SDOH important?<sup>11</sup>

They are key drivers of health inequities – especially among communities of color – that increase the risk for poor health outcomes.

Reducing and eliminating these disparities is essential to reaching health equity.

## Social Determinants of Health



<sup>11</sup>Social Determinants of Health, Health Equity, and Vision Loss, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/determinants/index.html> (Last reviewed November 2022 / Retrieved June 2023)

# Acknowledging Health Disparities



## Historically underserved groups:<sup>10</sup>

- Black people or African-Americans
- Latinx and Hispanic people
- People of Asian or Pacific Island descent
- Native American/Alaska Native people
- People who have a lower socioeconomic status
- LGBTQ+ community

<sup>10</sup>Health disparities and pregnancy, March of Dimes (Last reviewed June 2021 / Retrieved June 2023) <https://www.marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/pregnancy/health-disparities-and-pregnancy>

# Vision Care During Pregnancy



# Health Disparities and Pregnancy

Some groups of women are more likely than others to have pregnancy-related conditions such as:<sup>12</sup>



Preterm labor and birth	Pregnancy-related death	Stillbirth, neonatal & infant mortality	Anemia
Asthma	Low birthweight	Gestational diabetes	Stress
High blood pressure	Preeclampsia	Postpartum hemorrhage	Perinatal mental health conditions

<sup>12</sup>Health disparities and pregnancy, March of Dimes (Published June 2021 / Accessed & retrieved June 2023) <https://www.marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/pregnancy/health-disparities-and-pregnancy>



# Ocular Changes in Pregnancy

## Refractive changes

- Corneal thickness and curvature increase during 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester
- Refractive surgery is contraindicated

## Ocular surface disease

- Contact lens intolerance due to dry eye disease and increased corneal thickness
- Hormonal changes leading to dry eye disease

## Glaucoma treatments

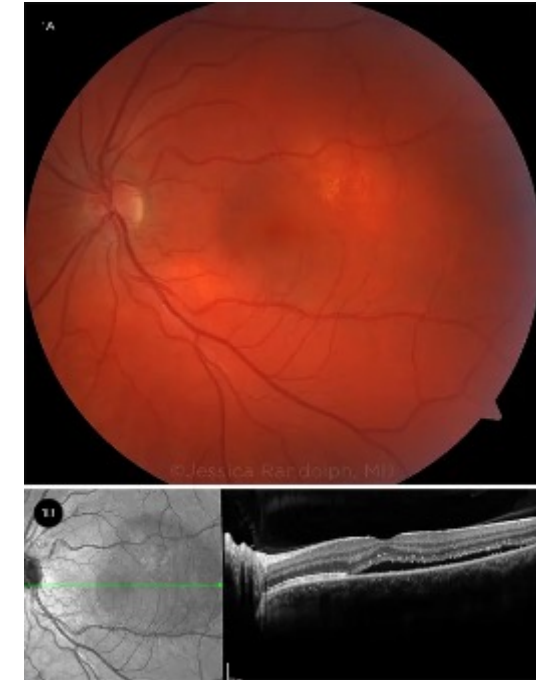
- Medical and surgical glaucoma treatments are being evaluated

## Preeclampsia or eclampsia

- Retinopathy: most common ocular finding in preeclampsia or eclampsia
- Cortical blindness: occurs in 1-15% of cases

## Central serous chorioretinopathy

- Occurs most often in the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester
- Vision loss, central scotoma, delayed recovery after photostress, metamorphopsia, and loss of color saturation



CENTRAL SEROUS CHORIORETINOPATHY



# Ocular Changes in Pregnancy

## Noninfectious uveitis

- Tendency to become less active during pregnancy

## Occlusive vascular disorders

- Purtscher-like retinopathy
- Disseminated intravascular coagulation
- Antiphospholipid syndrome

## Sheehan Syndrome

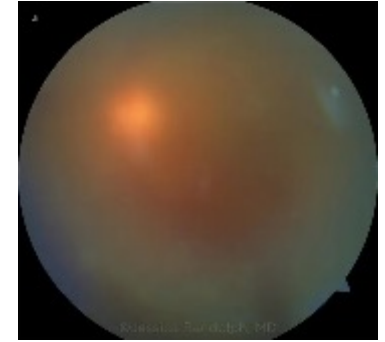
- Ischemic pituitary necrosis, gland enlargement
- Presents with headache, vision loss, visual field defect, ophthalmoplegia

## Idiopathic intracranial hypertension

- Commonly seen in obese females, mostly in first trimester

## Preexisting ocular disease

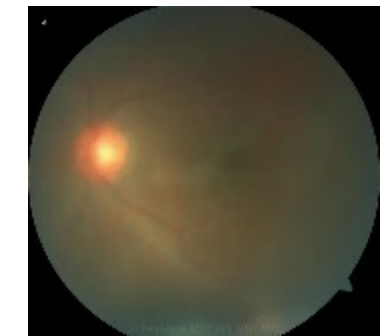
- Diabetic retinopathy
- Uveitis
- Reactivation of latent toxoplasmosis



UVEITIS



IDIOPATHIC INTRACRANIAL HYPERTENSION



TOXOPLASMOSIS

# Have a Pregnant Patient?

## 5 Quick Tips for Healthy Eyes During Pregnancy

Schedule an eye exam

Follow a healthy diet

Stay hydrated

Take frequent breaks

Practice good hygiene



SOURCE: Ophthalmology Breaking News, [www.ophthalmologybreakingnews.com/5-tips-on-eye-health-during-pregnancy](http://www.ophthalmologybreakingnews.com/5-tips-on-eye-health-during-pregnancy) (Published May 2023 / Retrieved June 2023)

# What Healthcare Professionals Can Do to Help

Multidisciplinary care between obstetrician, physician, ophthalmologist, and pediatrician is necessary

Improve access to critical services

Improve quality of care

Address maternal and infant mental health

Enhance support for families before & after birth

Improve data collection and oversight



SOURCE: *Eliminating Racial Disparities in Maternal and Infant Mortality*, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/eliminating-racial-disparities-maternal-infant-mortality/> (Published May 2019 / Retrieved June 2023)

# Value-Add of Eye Health Programs

**Early disease detection  
and intervention**

**Access to the full continuum  
of vision care services**

**Broaden access to medical  
vision care services**

**Minimize referrals and  
follow-up appointments  
with specialists**



**VersantHealth<sup>®</sup>**

**SEE EVERYTHING.**

**BE ANYTHING.<sup>™</sup>**