



## Common Problems of Aging: Hearing and Vision

➔ **ADULTS NEED EYE AND EAR EXAMS!** ➔

Many adults with developmental disabilities have hearing and/or vision losses that have gone undetected. Some of the loss is **normal with aging**. Other loss may be **related to disease** and can lead to permanent damage. Regular exams can lead to appropriate support and treatment, which can prevent further problems. Adults who have **Down Syndrome** are at very high risk for hearing and vision problems and tend to have them at an **earlier age**.

### EYE DISEASES



- ❖ Can lead to vision loss and even **blindness** (Examples: cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration)
- ❖ For some diseases, loss of vision can be **prevented** if caught early enough.
- ❖ Even when there is vision loss, it is important to know **what type of loss** and **how bad** it is so we can provide the best supports.

### Signs of a possible eye disease or problem with vision:

- ❖ Redness of eye or area around eyes, rubbing eyes
- ❖ Squinting, shutting or covering one eye
- ❖ Getting closer to the TV
- ❖ Tipping or thrusting head forward
- ❖ Holding page or object closer to eyes
- ❖ Stumbling or hesitancy on step or curb
- ❖ Self-injurious behaviors
- ❖ Isolating or refusing to participate in previous activities



## HEARING PROBLEMS

Hearing problems may also be due to **normal changes of aging**. Other causes of hearing problems may be from blockage by **earwax**, damage to the **ear drum**, or damage related to **medications, infections**, or diseases like **diabetes**.



### Signs of possible problems with hearing:

- ❖ Talking louder than necessary
- ❖ Inappropriate responses to questions
- ❖ Sitting close to the TV or turning the volume up loud
- ❖ Confusion in noisy situations
- ❖ Isolating or refusing to participate in previous activities
- ❖ Self-injurious behaviors

### Supports for vision problems:

- ✓ Get an eye exam from an ophthalmologist or optometrist
- ✓ Eyeglasses may help
- ✓ Use high contrast colors, non-glare lighting and surfaces, and large print
- ✓ Provide increased lighting and use night lights
- ✓ Organize belongings and keep locations consistent
- ✓ Keep eyeglasses clean and prevent scratches
- ✓ Engage in daytime activities
- ✓ Provide support for night-time activities
- ✓ Allow time to adjust to change of light
- ✓ Protect the “good” eye (if there is one)

### Supports for hearing problems:

- ✓ Get regular exams with a hearing professional to check for wax, disease, and gradual hearing loss
- ✓ Hearing aid if indicated
- ✓ Speak clearly and slowly, with lower tones
- ✓ Reduce background noise
- ✓ When speaking, face person with light on your face, not behind you
- ✓ Keep hearing aid clean, with fresh batteries