

CONTACT: Sandra McGee, bmcpublications@aol.com, 415-435-1883

8 Tips for Lifestyle Changes for the Visually-Impaired

by William L. McGee

- Purchase a closed-circuit TV (CCTV) for reading. Granted this is slow and tedious, but without this magnification device I would not be able to read or write.
- Move to a small town where you can get around on foot for exercise and walk to most basic services, e.g., a bus stop, grocery store, bank, barber, post office, and restaurants. Since I cannot drive, this affords me some independence as well as feeling like I can help out with daily errands.
- Use your sense of touch to apply toothpaste to your finger and then to your teeth. With no central vision, it is easy to miss the toothbrush.
- Inform family, friends and neighbors to identify themselves as they approach you. Even if it looks like I am looking at them, I cannot see the details of their faces. This applies even to my wife who identifies herself if we meet on the street.
- Use plates, bowls and cups that have a white or black interior. It is easier to see food against these background colors.
- Use a large spoon to eat most meals. Even though this may not be proper etiquette, without central vision, it is almost impossible to spear food with a fork.
- Use old-fashioned glasses for all beverages. Without central vision, it is too easy to knock over a stem glass.
- Apply some type of tactile material to buttons you push on a daily basis, e.g., the one-minute button on the microwave, the start button on the coffeemaker, the on/off button on the computer compressor.

William L. McGee is the co-author with Sandra McGee of "Learning to Cope with Sight Loss: Six Weeks at a VA Blind Rehabilitation Center" (BMC Publications, 2010). For more details, visit www.SightLossTheBook.com.