



Diabetes and your eyes

Living with diabetes means looking out for your health through proper medication, close monitoring of blood sugar levels, a healthy diet, regular exercise—and regular vision care. In fact, diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in adults ages 20 to 74.¹

However, proper eye care can lead to the early detection, and early treatment of vision-related complications, including:

Glaucoma

If you have diabetes, you are more likely to develop glaucoma, according to the American Diabetes Association. Glaucoma occurs when increased fluid pressure in the eyes damages the nerve fibers in the optic nerve. While glaucoma can lead to irreversible vision loss, its progression can be slowed if it's detected and treated early.

Cataracts

A cataract clouds the eye's lens, which blocks the passage of light. The condition is typically associated with aging, but the American Diabetes Association says diabetics are 60 percent more likely to develop cataracts. Regular eye exams can help identify and lead to the treatment of cataracts before they affect your quality of life.

Diabetic retinopathy

The leading cause of blindness among adults,¹ retinopathy is the most common eye complication in diabetic patients. Initial symptoms are very slight or even unnoticeable, so diabetic retinopathy often goes undiagnosed. It can, however, be detected during an annual comprehensive eye exam and treated.

Annual, comprehensive eye exams can help detect changes in your vision early on, enabling prompt referral and treatment that can lessen the risk of vision loss.

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In addition, be sure to see your eye care provider if you notice any of the following changes to your vision:

- Blurry, double or cloudy vision
- Pain or pressure in one or both eyes
- Trouble with peripheral vision
- Floating or flashing lights
- Dark spots

Early detection is key
Regular eye exams can help identify early signs of certain chronic health conditions:²

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

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Eye care professionals do not take the place of your physician, and are not a substitute for regular physical exams by your medical doctor.

¹"Diabetic retinopathy," National Eye Institute, nei.nih.gov Accessed December 2019.

²"Keep an eye on your vision health," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov. Accessed December 2019.

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