



Diabetes Education

Diabetes can cause the very small blood vessels in the eye to become fragile or blocked, resulting in damage that affects your ability to see. These eye problems may have no symptoms in their early, treatable stages, so... It's very **IMPORTANT** for you to have a **COMPLETE** eye exam every year.



What Can I Do to Prevent Diabetic Eye Problems?

- **CHECK** and keep your blood glucose sugar and blood pressure as close to normal as you can.
- Have an ophthalmologist (*eye doctor*) examine your eyes *ONCE* a year.
- If you are pregnant see an eye care professional during your first 3 months.
- If you are planning to get pregnant, ask your doctor if you should have an eye exam.

Keep Your Eyes Healthy

How Can Diabetes Hurt My Eyes?

High blood glucose (*sugar*) and high blood pressure from diabetes can hurt four parts of your eye:

1. **Retina:** The retina is the lining at the back of the eye. The retina's job is to sense light coming into the eye.
2. **Vitreous:** The vitreous is a jelly-like fluid that fills the back of the eye.
3. **Lens:** The lens is at the front of the eye. It focuses light on the retina.
4. **Optic nerve:** The optic nerve is the eye's main nerve to the brain.

What Can I Do About Diabetes Retina Problems?

First, **CHECK** your blood glucose sugar and blood pressure as directed by your care team. Keep it as close to normal as you can.

Consult with your eye care professional. They may suggest laser treatment, which is when a light beam is aimed into the retina of the damaged eye. The beam closes off leaking blood vessels. It may stop blood and fluid from leaking into the vitreous. Laser treatment may slow the loss of sight. If a lot of blood has leaked into your vitreous and your sight is poor, your eye care professional might suggest you have a surgery called a vitrectomy. A **VITRECTOMY** removes blood and fluids from the vitreous of your eye. Then clean fluid is put back into the eye. The surgery can make your eyesight better.

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See Your Eye Care Professional If Your:

- Vision becomes blurry or your eye(s) hurt
- Having trouble reading signs or books
- Seeing double or you can't see things at the side as you used to
- Eyes get red and stay that way
- Feeling pressure in your eye or seeing spots or floaters

Keep Your Eyes Healthy

General Eye Care:

You have a lot of control over what happens to your eyes. First, **KEEP** your blood sugar levels under tight control. High blood sugar levels may make your vision temporarily blurry. Also, high blood pressure can make eye problems worse so it is important to bring high blood pressure under control. Quitting smoking will also help reduce possible eye complications.

See your eye care professional at least **ONCE a YEAR** for a dilated eye exam. Having your regular doctor look at your eyes is not enough. Only optometrists and ophthalmologists can detect the signs of retinopathy. Only ophthalmologists can treat retinopathy.

Computer Use and Your Eyes:

Computer linked eye-strain is an increasingly routine condition. The symptoms are sore, tired, burning eyes, blurred vision, headache, light sensitivity and dry eyes.

You Can Reduce the Strain on Your Eyes:

- ✓ Give your eyes an occasional break away from the monitor
- ✓ Set aside work and do it when your eyes need an extended interval away from the monitor
- ✓ Sit about one arm's length away from the display with your eyes level with the top of the display
- ✓ Make certain you blink consciously every so often to inhibit your eyes from drying.

Dry Eye Disease is a common complication of diabetes. **REMEMBER** to have routine checkups that include careful observations of the eye surface tissue.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, eating well, keeping the lids clean and the routine use of lubricants will help to keep your eyes healthy.

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