

swelling. Blurring of vision occurs and will get worse if left untreated. With proliferative retinopathy there are serious risks to eye health and the ability to see.

Q A What are the symptoms of diabetic eye disease?

Diabetic eye disease *often has no early symptoms*. If this is the case, it can only be found with a “dilated pupil” examination. This is why it’s essential for people with either type I or type II diabetes to get their eyes examined at least once every year.

If you detect any change in your vision, you should see your eyecare professional as soon as possible. See your eye doctor if you experience any of these eye problems:

- Blurry vision
- Vision problems that get worse or better during the day
- Changes in your center part of your vision
- Changes in the way you see colors
- Loss of peripheral vision (the inability to see objects at the sides of your field of view)
- Moving spots or other visual patterns

Q A How often should I get a dilated eye examination?

You should get a dilated eye examination once a year. In doing so, you’re giving yourself a chance to see the future more clearly.

Q A How can I protect myself from diabetic eye trouble?

A recent study on the complications of diabetes makes it clear: tight control over your blood sugar helps you stay healthy. In fact, researchers have found that people with diabetes who keep their hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) levels close to 7 percent have a much better chance of delaying or preventing vision problems. By keeping your glucose levels under control and by taking the HbA1c test as recommended by your physician, you’re doing the best thing you can for your vision.

See Your Doctor.

Now is a great time to have a dilated eye exam if you haven’t had one within the last year. Call your doctor today to take this important step toward protecting yourself against eye disease.



See your future more clearly

For people
with diabetes:
take a
closer look
at your
eye health.

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As a person with diabetes, you know how important it is to stay on top of your health. We're here to help you every step of the way. That's why we're committed to providing you with quality preventative care, such as diabetic eye disease screenings—because catching eye problems early on gives you a better look at your future.

Look Into Your Vision Health.

Q Why should staying on top of eye health be important to me?

A Because people with diabetes are at risk of developing eye diseases that can seriously affect the quality of their vision. These eye diseases include:

- **Cataract**—A cataract is a clouding of the eye's lens resulting in blurry vision. People with diabetes are twice as likely to develop a cataract as someone who does not have the disease. And people with diabetes are also more likely to develop a cataract earlier in life than other adults.
- **Glaucoma**—Glaucoma occurs when increased fluid pressure in the eye leads to progressive optic nerve damage. It has no symptoms at first, but it can seriously affect your vision if left untreated—or undetected. With early treatment, you can protect your eyes against serious vision loss or blindness. People with diabetes are nearly twice as likely to develop glaucoma as other adults.
- **Diabetic Retinopathy**—Diabetic retinopathy damages blood vessels in the part of the eye called the "retina." It harms the eye's ability to translate light into electrical impulses that the brain interprets as vision. It affects about half of the estimated 16 million people with diabetes in the United States.

Q What is the most common diabetic eye disease?

A Diabetic retinopathy is the most common diabetic eye disease—and a leading cause of blindness in American

adults. This is why it's especially important to get regular, dilated eye exams performed by your eyecare professional. By catching eye problems like diabetic retinopathy early on, you're giving yourself the best chance to stay healthier—longer.

Q A What causes retinopathy?

Diabetic retinopathy is a complex eye disease that is thought to be caused by three physical changes from the illness of diabetes itself. They are:

- **Hyperglycemia**—chronic high blood sugar levels.
- **Blood platelet abnormalities**—diabetes may make these circulating blood cells abnormally "sticky."
- **Blood vessel narrowing**—diabetes may cause the blood vessels of the retina to become constricted.

These abnormalities may cause the blood vessels of the eyes to leak, and cause an early swelling in this area, called macular edema. This will lead to sight-impairment.

Q A How does retinopathy develop?

There are two forms of this disease: "nonproliferative," also called "background," retinopathy and the more serious "proliferative" retinopathy. Background retinopathy can, however, be a warning sign that proliferative retinopathy will develop.

With nonproliferative or background retinopathy, blood vessels in the retina change in size. Some vessels may shrink while others swell in size. This is not usually threatening to vision, but it must be closely monitored by your health care team to make sure that further damage does not result.

If the condition progresses to proliferative retinopathy, areas of the retina do not receive enough blood and, as a result, new blood vessels grow. But these new blood vessels are delicate—they can break and cause leaks and

