

## **DIABETIC EYE DISEASE**

Approximately 10.3 million Americans have diabetes. More than half of these individuals are at risk for vision loss and other health problems because they don't know they have the disease.

Diabetic eye disease, a group of eye problems that affects those with diabetes, includes diabetic retinopathy, cataracts and glaucoma. The most common of these is diabetic retinopathy, which affects 5.3 million Americans age eighteen and older.

Diabetic retinopathy is a potentially vision threatening condition in which the blood vessels inside the retina become damaged from the high blood sugar levels associated with diabetes. This leads to the leakage of fluids into the retina and the obstruction of blood flow. Both may result in vision loss.

More than one third of those diagnosed with diabetes do not receive the recommended vision care and may be at risk for blindness. Because there are often no symptoms in the early stages of diabetic retinopathy, your vision may not be affected until the disease becomes severe.

Once diagnosed with diabetes, schedule a complete dilated eye examination with your Eye M.D. at least once a year. Make an appointment promptly if you experience blurred vision and floaters that:

- Affect only one eye
- Last more than a few days
- Are not associated with a change in blood sugar

In advanced cases of diabetic retinopathy, laser treatment has been shown to reduce the loss of vision. This surgery does not cure diabetic retinopathy, nor does it prevent future vision loss, especially if diabetes or blood pressure is not well controlled.

Diabetes can also affect your vision by causing cataracts and glaucoma. If you have diabetes, you may get cataracts at a younger age and your chances of developing glaucoma are doubled.

Early diagnosis of diabetes and effective control of blood sugar and hypertension through diet, exercise and medication can help to reduce your risk of developing eye diseases associated with diabetes.

*See your Eye M.D. ... because there's so much more to see.*

**An Eye M.D.** is an ophthalmologist - a medical doctor who provides the full spectrum of eye and vision care. From eyeglasses and contact lenses to medication and surgery, your Eye M.D. will help you keep your sight for life.

*Diabetes is  
the leading  
cause of  
blindness in  
working-age  
Americans*

For more information or  
to find an Eye M.D., visit  
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