



A Message From Your Eye M.D.

Diabetic Eye Disease

Approximately 29 million Americans age 20 or older have diabetes. But many, almost one-third, don't know they have the disease and are at risk for vision loss and other health problems.

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 18 and older.

Diabetic retinopathy is a potentially blinding 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 cause vision loss.

More than one-third of those diagnosed with diabetes do not receive the recommended vision care and are at risk for blindness. Early symptoms are often unnoticed, therefore your vision may not be affected until the disease is severe and less easily treated.

Once you are 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/or 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 risk of severe vision loss and blindness. This surgery does not cure diabetic retinopathy or restore vision which has already been lost, 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, most importantly, maintaining strict control of blood sugar and hypertension through diet, exercise and medication can help reduce your risk of developing eye diseases associated with diabetes.

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

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

 **AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY**
The Eye M.D. Association

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.