

Keep Vision in Your Future

Glaucoma Awareness Month



There's so much more in life to see

Don't let glaucoma take your sight away

The best years are yet to come. With more free time, you can set your sights on wonderful places to go and people to see. Just make sure you keep an eye on glaucoma.

Glaucoma is a group of diseases that damages the eye's optic nerve, which carries visual signals to the brain. It can lead to vision loss or blindness if left untreated. Primary open-angle glaucoma is the most common form of this disease and often has no symptoms in its early stages. Quite frequently, by the

time people are diagnosed with glaucoma, they've already begun to notice changes in their side, or peripheral, vision.

While anyone can get glaucoma, people at higher risk for glaucoma include African Americans age 40 and older; everyone over age 60, especially Mexican Americans; and those with a family history of the disease.

"Studies show that at least half of all persons with glaucoma don't know they have this potentially blinding eye disease," said National Eye Institute (NEI) director Dr. Paul Sieving. "The good news is that glaucoma can be detected in its early stages through a comprehensive dilated eye exam."

A comprehensive dilated eye exam is a procedure in which an eye care professional places drops in your eyes to dilate (or widen) the pupil to examine the back of your eyes and check the optic nerve for signs of disease. This exam may help save your sight because when glaucoma is detected early, it can be controlled through medications or surgery. If you are at higher risk, make sure you get a comprehensive dilated eye exam every 1 to 2 years and encourage family members to do so as well.

So wherever life takes you, keep vision in your future. Don't wait until you notice problems with your vision to see an eye care professional. A low-cost exam may be available to you through Medicare. For more information, call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit www.medicare.gov.

For additional information about glaucoma, visit www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma or call NEI at 301-496-5248.



National Eye Institute



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