



Focus on Glaucoma

It is important for African Americans to maintain healthy vision because they are at higher risk for certain eye diseases that, if left untreated, can cause vision loss, even blindness. The good news is that vision loss can often be prevented.

This fact sheet contains information about a common eye disease – glaucoma – including the causes, symptoms, and what you can do to focus on your vision.

GLAUCOMA

More than 520,000 African Americans have glaucoma, and this number is expected to exceed 860,000 by 2030. Half of all people with glaucoma don't know they have it.

What is it?

- Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that can damage the optic nerve. It affects side or peripheral vision first, and if left untreated, can cause vision loss and blindness.

What causes it?

- Several studies have shown that increased eye pressure is a major risk factor for optic nerve damage.

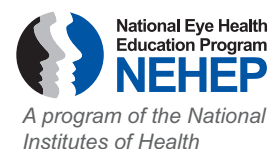
Write
the **Vision**
Make your plan to protect your sight.

What are the symptoms?

- There are usually no symptoms or pain in the early stages.

How can you focus on your vision?

- African Americans are at higher risk of glaucoma at a younger age. If you are over age 40 or have a family history of glaucoma, have a comprehensive dilated eye exam every 1 to 2 years.



HEALTHY VISION

Now that you know more about glaucoma and how to help prevent vision loss, here are some lifestyle tips to help you focus on your vision:

- Don't wait for problems with your eyes. Make comprehensive dilated eye exams part of your health routine.
- Know your family's eye health history. If eye disease runs in your family, you may be at higher risk.
- Eat a nutritious diet that includes leafy green veggies and fish, such as salmon, tuna, and halibut.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Control your diabetes if you have it.
- Quit smoking or never start.
- Protect your eyes when playing sports or doing yard work.

For more information on glaucoma and tips on protecting your vision, visit:

www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma



National Eye Institute



A program of the National Institutes of Health