

5 Things You Should Know About Diabetic Eye Disease



Did you know that diabetes can cause eye disease? If left untreated, it can cause vision loss or even blindness. To help you keep your vision healthy, here are five things the National Eye Institute (NEI) would like you to know about diabetic eye disease:

1 A group of eye problems—

People with diabetes may face several eye problems as a complication of this disease. They include cataract, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy, which is the leading cause of blindness in American adults age 20–74.

2 No symptoms, no pain—

In its early stages, diabetic retinopathy has no symptoms. A person may not notice vision changes until the disease advances. Blurred vision may occur when the macula swells from the leaking fluid (called macular edema). If new vessels have grown on the surface of the retina, they can bleed into the eye, blocking vision.

3 Have diabetes? You are at risk—

Anyone with diabetes is at risk of getting diabetic retinopathy. The longer someone has diabetes, the more likely he or she will get this eye disease. In fact, between 40 and 45 percent of those with diagnosed diabetes have some degree of diabetic retinopathy.

4 Stay on TRACK—

That is: **T**ake your medications as prescribed by your doctor; **R**each and maintain a healthy weight; **A**dd more physical activity to your daily routine; **C**ontrol your ABC's—A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels; and **K**ick the smoking habit.

5 Get a dilated eye exam—

If you have diabetes, be sure to have a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year. Diabetic eye disease can be detected early and treated before noticeable vision loss occurs.

Video:

This video describes what the doctor sees when examining the retina (the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye), macula (the part of the retina needed for sharp, central vision), and optic nerve (which connects the retina to the brain).



To learn more, visit <http://www.nei.nih.gov/diabetes>.