

Make a Resolution for Healthy Vision



National Eye Institute



A program of the National Institutes of Health



January is Glaucoma Awareness Month

You could have
glaucoma
and not even know it.

Make a New Year's resolution to find out if you do.

As you plan for a healthier new year, why not add this sight-saving exercise to your list of resolutions: *Get a comprehensive dilated eye exam.* It's the only way to find out for sure whether you have glaucoma, one of the leading causes of blindness in America.

An eye disease that can rob you of your vision, glaucoma often comes with no early warning. No pain. No discomfort. No blurry vision. Nearly 3 million people have glaucoma, yet half don't know they have it.

Glaucoma starts with a buildup of fluid that increases the pressure in your eye and can cause damage to the optic nerve, the bundle of nerve fibers that transfers visual images to your brain. Glaucoma first affects your peripheral, or side, vision. As the disease advances, more noticeable vision loss will occur, and if not controlled, the disease can lead to permanent vision loss and blindness.

You can take action to protect yourself from glaucoma.

"If glaucoma is detected in its early stages, pressure can be controlled through medication or

surgery, and the progression of the disease can be delayed," says Dr. Paul Sieving, director of the National Eye Institute (NEI). "Early detection by having a comprehensive dilated eye exam every one to two years is key to protecting vision, especially if you are at higher risk."

Are you at higher risk for glaucoma? You could be if you:

- Are African American and age 40 or older
- Are over age 60, especially if you are Hispanic/Latino
- Have a family history of the disease

Everyone at higher risk should get a comprehensive dilated eye exam, which is different from the basic eye exam for glasses. A comprehensive dilated eye exam is a procedure in which an eye care professional places drops in your eyes to widen the pupil and looks at the optic nerve for signs of the disease.

This year, make a resolution for healthier vision. Make sure your eyes are healthy and you are seeing your best in the new year. Schedule a comprehensive dilated eye exam and encourage your friends and loved ones to do the same.

To learn more about glaucoma, view this [animated video](#). For tips on finding an eye care professional and for information on financial assistance, visit www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma or call NEI at 301-496-5248.



To learn more, visit www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma



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