

## DIABETIC EYE CARE

### Common diabetic eye diseases and treatments:

- **Diabetic retinopathy**  
(the most common form)  
Diabetic retinopathy occurs when diabetes damages the tiny blood vessels in the retina. In the early stages, the retinal blood vessels swell and leak fluid. In the later stages, abnormal, weak new vessels grow on the retina's surface and leak blood into the eye.  
Treatments: Laser treatment or Vitrectomy (surgical removal of the clear, colorless substance that fills the eyeball)
- **Cataract** - The lens of the eye become cloudy leading to blurry vision.  
Treatments: Surgical removal of the cloudy lens and replacement with an artificial lens.
- **Glaucoma** - An increase in fluid pressure inside the eye leading to optic nerve damage and loss of vision.  
Treatments: Prescription eye drops or surgery.



### What are the symptoms of diabetic retinopathy?

- In the early stages of retinopathy, there are no symptoms, no pain, and no vision change. Some people may notice blurred vision, loss of central vision, or a change in color vision.
- In the later stages of retinopathy, retinal detachment can lead to severe vision loss or even blindness.

Report to your doctor if there is a sudden loss of vision, sudden appearance of floaters, appearance of a shade or curtain coming across the vision field, eye pain or sensitivity to light.

### Diabetic eye diseases can be prevented by:

- Good blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol control
- Annual dilated eye exam
- Not smoking
- Wearing ultra violet (UV) protective sunglasses
- Eating foods high in anti-oxidants (colorful fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds)



### Exercise precautions for those with active diabetic retinopathy

#### Avoid

- Bending over
- Activities that increase blood pressure or involve holding of breath, e.g. heavy weight lifting, straining during bowel movement
- Vigorous bouncing
- Rapid head movements
- Extreme changes in atmospheric pressure, e.g. sky diving or scuba diving

**American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends that a comprehensive dilated eye exam be done annually.**