

## DIABETES AND YOUR EYES

Diabetes is a disease that can develop when glucose levels in your blood (also known as blood sugar) are too high. Diabetes can cause changes in your vision that range from blurry vision to permanent vision loss. The best way to prevent vision loss from diabetes is by receiving **a dilated eye exam every year with your eye doctor.**

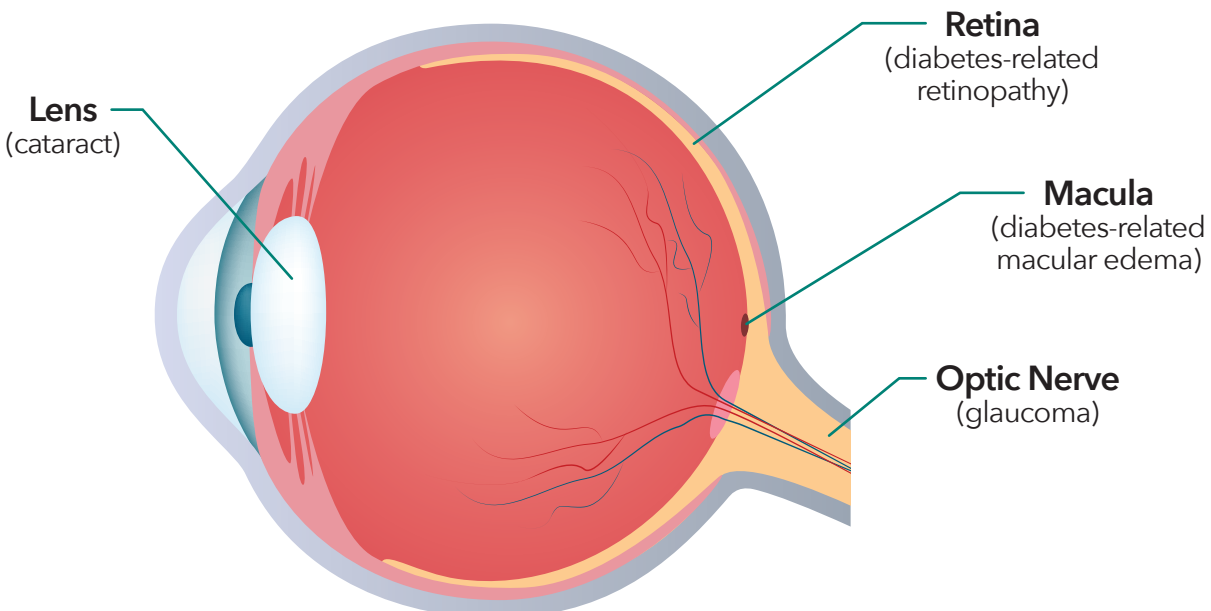
### Risk Factors of Diabetes

- Adults ages 45 and older
- Family history of diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Overweight/obesity
- Having excess weight
- Certain populations such as African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, American Indians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders have a higher chance of developing diabetes



### Anatomy of the Eye

Diabetes affects the entire health of your eye. Diabetes-related eye disease mainly affects the retina (back of the eye), but can also affect the lens, optic nerve, and drainage system of your eye. Diabetes-related eye disease can make it hard to read, see signs, drive at night, and can lead to permanent vision loss.



## DIABETES-RELATED EYE DISEASES:

### Diabetes-Related Retinopathy



Normal Vision

Diabetes-Related  
Retinopathy

**Diabetes-Related Retinopathy** occurs when small blood vessels leak and bleed in the **retina**. The **retina** is located at the back of the eye and helps you see clearly. Diabetes-related retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in American adults. Diabetes-related retinopathy is often treated through frequent injectable drugs to maintain the health of the **retina** over time.

### Diabetes-Related Macular Edema



Normal Vision

Diabetes-Related  
Macular Edema

**Diabetes-Related Macular Edema** occurs when small blood vessels in the center of the **retina (the macula)** become leaky and cause the **macula** to swell. Swelling can cause blurry vision, changes in color vision, or permanent vision loss. Diabetes-related macular edema is often treated with laser treatments or steroid injections to decrease swelling in the eye.

### Cataract

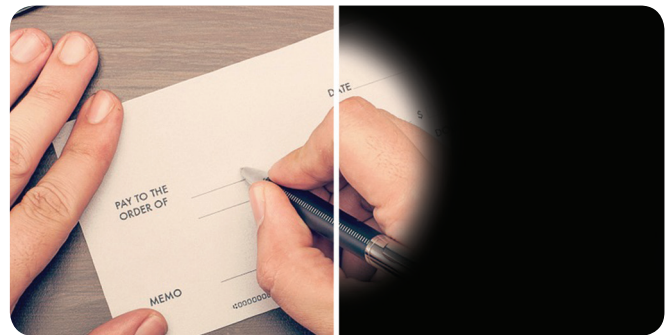


Normal Vision

Cataract

**Cataract** is the clouding of the eyes **lens**. This can cause your vision to become blurry and colors to appear dull. Generally, cataracts can be treated with surgery. Besides aging, diabetes is the most common risk factor for cataracts.

### Glaucoma



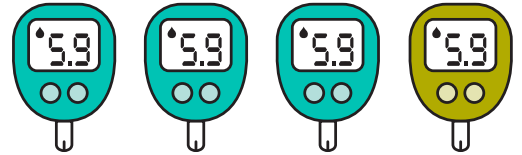
Normal Vision

Glaucoma

**Glaucoma**, "the silent thief of sight," develops when there is too much pressure in the eye, damaging the **optic nerve**. Vision loss typically starts without any noticeable symptoms. If left untreated, glaucoma can lead to permanent vision loss. Once vision is lost to glaucoma it cannot be reversed. Medications and surgery may slow the disease development and progression.

## DIABETES-RELATED RETINOPATHY

Diabetes-related retinopathy affects **1 in 4** people living with diabetes. It is the number one cause of blindness in American adults. It occurs when small blood vessels leak in the retina. The retina is located at the back of the eye and helps you see clearly. **To avoid vision loss from diabetes-related retinopathy, it is highly recommended people with diabetes received a dilated eye exam every year.**

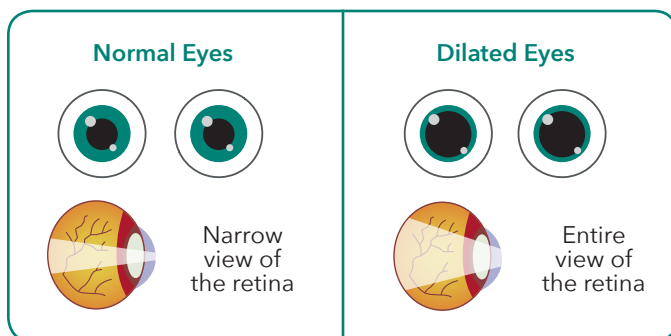


### Symptoms of Diabetes-Related Retinopathy

- Sudden increase in eye floaters (spots or dark cobweb-like strands that appear to float in your field of vision)
- Blurry vision
- Sudden loss of vision in one eye
- Poor color vision
- Poor night vision
- Halos around lights
- Seeing flashing lights



*Contact your eye doctor right away if you experience any of these symptoms.*



### Dilated Eye Exams

A **dilated** eye exam is key for people with diabetes. Dilation of the eyes is done with eye drops to widen the front of the eye, called the pupil. Dilating the pupils allows your eye doctor to see the entire back of your eye. With dilation, your eye doctor can check the retina (back of the eye), the macula (central vision), and the entire health of the eye to ensure its healthy.

### How to Manage your Diabetes and Keep Your Eyes Healthy



Visit your eye doctor every year for a dilated eye exam



Have an A1C of 7 or below, or at a level your eye doctor recommends



Quit smoking, work with a healthcare provider on a plan to quit



Take your medications as prescribed

## DIABETES: A RISING VISION HEALTH EPIDEMIC

**A1C** **DIABETES-RELATED  
RETINOPATHY  
IS THE LEADING CAUSE  
OF BLINDNESS**  
AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AMONG  
WORKING-AGE ADULTS IN THE U.S.

**40% OF**  
**WISCONSIN ADULTS**  
ARE EXPECTED TO DEVELOP  
**TYPE 2 DIABETES**  
DURING THEIR LIFETIME

**HEALTHY RETINA**



**DIABETES-RELATED  
RETINOPATHY**

APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 3 ADULTS  
WITH DIABETES AGE 40 & OLDER  
ALREADY SHOW SOME SIGNS OF  
**DIABETES-RELATED RETINOPATHY**



**AN ESTIMATED**  
**138,000**  
**WISCONSINITES**  
**HAVE DIABETES**  
**AND DO NOT KNOW IT**

THAT IS THE EQUIVALENT OF  
SOLD OUT BREWERS GAMES **3**  
**AT MILLER PARK**



### Sources

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