



Don't Let Diabetes Steal Your Sight



DID YOU KNOW THAT DIABETES IS THE MOST FREQUENT CAUSE OF BLINDNESS IN WORKING-AGE AMERICANS?

Often diabetes can go undetected for many years before it's diagnosed. During that time, gradual damage is occurring to the small vessels throughout the body, including the retina. The retina is the light sensitive inner lining of the back of the eye that is like the film of a camera. The retina transmits the images we see along the optic nerve and to the brain. The injury that occurs along this system may initially be undetectable. **HOWEVER, NEARLY 90% OF PATIENTS WILL SHOW SOME FORM OF DAMAGE TO THE RETINA, WITHIN 10 YEARS OF DIAGNOSIS, WITH SOME PATIENTS**

SHOWING CHANGES ALREADY AT THE TIME OF THEIR INITIAL DIABETES DIAGNOSIS. Unfortunately, this damage can occur painlessly and with minimal symptoms, highlighting the need for routine eye examinations.



How Do I Preserve My Eyesight

The most important thing you and your physician can do is control your diabetes. SEVERAL STUDIES HAVE PROVIDED OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE THAT EXCELLENT DIABETIC CONTROL IS THE KEY TO AVOIDING BLINDNESS AND OTHER COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES. One way your healthcare provider will monitor your diabetes control is with a test called the Hemoglobin A1C test. This simple blood test gives an estimate of the average glucose level in your blood over the past 3 months. A result of less than 7% indicates good diabetic control.

Furthermore, every 1% drop in the Hemoglobin A1C level decreases your risk of damage to the retina by 38%. In addition to blood sugar control, it is important to control other medical problems such as blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.

Recommended eye exams:

- Type 1 Diabetes: Within 3-5 years of diagnosis, then yearly
- Type 2 Diabetes: At time of diagnosis, then yearly
- Pregnant women: During the 1st trimester

Diabetic retinopathy can progress quickly during pregnancy

What Symptoms Should I Look For?

The most effective way to manage diabetic eye disease is to address it before it affects vision. By the time a patient becomes symptomatic, very advanced disease may already be present and may require aggressive treatments and even surgery. At that point, even with therapy, patients are at high risk of further vision loss. **DETECTING AND TREATING DAMAGE EARLY GIVES YOU THE**

continued on next page.



BEST CHANCE OF PRESERVING YOUR VISION FOR A LIFETIME.

The symptoms listed below may be caused by damage to the retina from diabetes or other diseases. If you experience any of these symptoms, it is important to get your retina evaluated promptly:

- Gradual blurred vision or vision loss (over several months to years)
- Distortion (Metamorphopsia)
- Trouble with night vision (Nyctalopia)
- Color vision abnormalities
- Sudden hair-like floaters in the vision (May indicate bleeding in the back of the eye)
- Objects smaller than normal in one eye (Micropsia)

Questions to Ask Your Eye Doctor

- What is my diagnosis?
- Can this disease be treated?
- What is my treatment plan?
- When will treatment start?
- If I don't need treatment, how often should I return for a checkup?

Notes:

Our Mission

Retina Associates of Florida provides quality, leading-edge retinal care. Our success is measured by the satisfaction of our patients and referring doctors, the competency of our staff, and the recognition by our peers of the value of our efforts in continuous improvement in the provision of retinal care and research.

If you have diabetes, call us at **1-800-282-9141** to make an appointment at one of our offices most convenient to you. Feel free to check our website at www.tamparetina.com for a map of our locations and other helpful information.



Marc C. Peden, MD

Mark E. Hammer, MD

Ivan J. Suñer, MD



813-875-6373
800-282-9141

www.TampaRetina.com



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