

DIABETIC RETINOPATHY (DR)

Diabetic retinopathy (DR) is a frequent complication of diabetes. An elevation in blood sugar damages the delicate blood vessels inside the eye, causing them to leak, bleed and become blocked. It is the most serious sight-threatening complication of diabetes. If untreated, DR can lead to permanent vision loss and blindness.

Symptoms:

- Fluctuating or blurring of vision
- Occasional double vision
- Night vision problems
- Flashes and floaters within the eyes

Diagnosis: Early signs of diabetes sometimes can be detected in comprehensive eye exams where a doctor of optometry performs a variety of tests to determine any problems.

Treatment: Monitoring and maintaining control of diabetes are crucial. Regular visits to your physician are necessary, along with adherence to the doctor's instructions on diet, exercise and medication. Following these steps can lower one's risk of developing diabetic retinopathy by as much as 76 percent. It's also important to see your doctor of optometry at least annually when you have been diagnosed with diabetes.

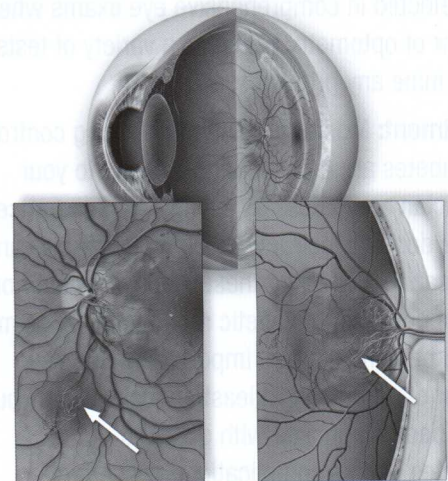
Diabetes and its complications may affect many parts of the eye, resulting in changes in nearsightedness, farsightedness and premature presbyopia (the inability to focus on close objects with age). These changes often can be handled with new eyeglasses or contact lenses and, in some cases, surgical procedures. The disease

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may also contribute to the onset of cataracts, glaucoma, strabismus (lack of eye alignment) and decreased corneal sensitivity. There are eye drops, medicines and surgical procedures to treat these problems. In its early stages, diabetic retinopathy can be treated with laser therapy. In more advanced cases, surgery may be required. Once damage occurs, though, the effects are usually permanent. For this reason, it is critical to follow your doctor's instructions and have annual dilated eye examinations to monitor the progress of the eye disease.

Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy



Retinal
Neovascularization
with Vitreous
Hemorrhage

Disc
Neovascularization
with Vitreous
Hemorrhage