

Fast Facts

Diabetic Retinopathy

- Complication of diabetes involving the eyes
 - Occurs when you have high blood sugar for extended periods of time
- Leads to blockages that cut off blood supply to tiny blood vessels of the retina (the layer of tissue in the back of the eye that senses light and sends images to the brain
 - Eye attempts to grow new blood vessels, but they don't develop correctly and often leak
- Abnormal blood vessels leak, often into the interior part of the eye (vitreous cavity), which is known as a vitreous hemorrhage—usually bleeding stops quickly and the blood is reabsorbed
- Abnormal blood vessels form scar tissue and can cause the retina to pull away from the back of the eye (retinal detachment), which is consider an emergency
- Abnormal blood vessels grow in areas where there usually aren't blood vessels causing them to interfere with the normal flow of fluid within the eye resulting in a buildup of pressure (glaucoma)
 - Diabetic retinopathy can result in blindness due to any one of these factors
 - Affects both eyes
- Greater risk for developing if you have had diabetes for a long period of time, your blood sugar is poorly controlled, you have high blood pressure, you have high cholesterol, are pregnant, use tobacco or are African-American, Hispanic or Native American (diabetes is more prevalent among individuals in these demographics).

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<u>Early stages:</u> -None <u>Advance stages:</u> -Floaters (spots/dark strings floating in your vision) -Blurred vision -Fluctuating vision -Impaired color vision -Dark/empty areas in vision -Vision loss	-Depends on the severity <u>Early stages:</u> -Wait and see approach with close monitoring -Manage blood sugar <u>Advance stages:</u> -Immediate surgery—type depends on what is wrong	-Regular eye exams -Let doctor know of any vision changes without delay -Manage diabetes by checking blood sugar several times a day, eating healthy and getting regularly exercise -Get a glycosylated hemoglobin (A1C) test, which measures your average blood sugar for a couple month period (the goal is to have an A1C under 7 percent) -Don't smoke

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