

Diabetic Eye Disease

What is diabetic eye disease?

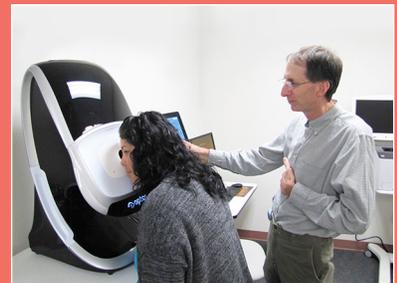
Diabetic eye disease can happen when a person has high blood sugar over a long period of time. This causes blood vessels in the back of the eye to leak or bleed. It can occur in one or both eyes. This is called **retinopathy**.

How do you know if you have diabetic eye disease?

There are often no warning signs. The only way to know if you have diabetic eye disease is by getting your eyes checked. People with diabetes need to get their eyes checked at least once a year.

There are two ways to check:

- 1 Get a dilated eye exam by an eye doctor.
- 2 Some clinics can screen for diabetic eye disease by taking pictures of the back of your eyes.



You can help prevent or slow diabetic eye disease.



Manage your blood sugar and blood pressure.



Take your medicines as prescribed.



Get an eye exam every year.



Produced by the IHS Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention in collaboration with the IHS National Diabetes Eye Care Committee. For more diabetes information and materials, visit www.ihs.gov/diabetes
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Take a picture with your cell phone. Look at the picture later as a reminder!



How is diabetic eye disease treated?

People who have diabetic eye disease are seen more often by an eye doctor. They may also need the following:

- Eye medicines
- Laser treatment
- Surgery



Diabetes increases the risk for common eye problems, such as cataracts and glaucoma.

- **Cataracts** are cloudy areas in the lens of the eye.
- **Glaucoma** happens when there is increased pressure in the eye.

Your eye doctor can check for these eye problems during an eye exam.



If you notice sudden changes in your vision, such as dark spots or vision loss, get checked by a health care provider right away.



Women with diabetes need to get an eye exam if they are planning to become pregnant and while they are pregnant.



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