

DIABETIC RETINOPATHY



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DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

DIABETIC EYE DISEASE

Patients with diabetes are at risk of developing certain disorders that can affect the eye. These include cataract, diabetic retinopathy and problems involving the optic nerve. A common manifestation of diabetes in the eye is diabetic retinopathy.

WHAT IS DIABETIC RETINOPATHY?

Diabetic retinopathy is primarily a disorder of the retinal blood vessels. The retina is the light sensitive membrane in your eye that enables vision. Damage to the retinal blood vessels can cause vision loss or even blindness.

In diabetes the blood sugar levels are too high. This causes the cells that line the blood vessels to swell and become damaged. As a result, the blood vessels

may leak fluid or bleed into the retina and this can cause a significant vision loss. As the blood vessels become increasingly damaged with poor blood sugar control, they can become completely obstructed, depleting the retina of blood and nutrients. Abnormal new blood vessels may then grow, and possibly bleed into the cavity of the eye, causing a more severe vision loss.

WHO GETS IT?

All people with diabetes are at risk of eye disease. In younger people with diabetes the onset can be rapid, whereas in older people it may come on more slowly. After ten years of the disease most people with diabetes will have some degree of retinopathy but this is not usually sight threatening.

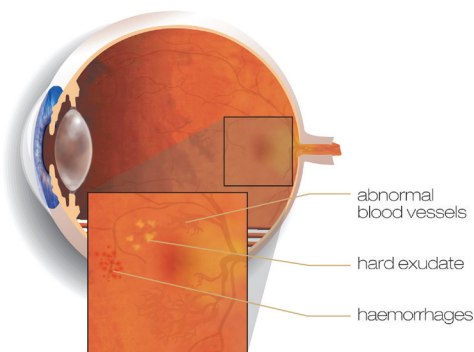
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Some common symptoms of diabetic retinopathy are:

- Blurred vision (often linked to blood sugar levels)
- Floaters and flashes
- Sudden loss of vision.

CAN IT BE PREVENTED?

Good control of the blood sugars will reduce the risk of retinopathy and control of hypertension is also important. Smoking



Diabetic retinopathy

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Normal Vision



Early Stage

Moderate

Severe

increases the risk of serious eye disease. Regular eye checks including a retinal examination is by far the most important preventive measure for avoiding diabetic vision loss. Close monitoring of your diabetes by your family doctor is also imperative. Special care needs to be taken by diabetic patients who are pregnant.

CAN IT BE TREATED?

Diabetic patients who have vision problems from retinopathy can usually be successfully managed with laser and/or other treatment options. Early treatment is better for providing a successful outcome. It is very important to have regular retinal examinations so that any abnormality can be detected and treated appropriately. Sometimes retinal surgery is required for diabetic eye disease but only for advanced cases and when severe visual loss has occurred.

Auckland Eye is New Zealand's centre of excellence for eye care, with a totally tailored approach that provides the best possible outcome for patients. Our team of leading experts are highly trained in their specialist fields, providing assessment and management of a comprehensive range of eye conditions.

Combined with Oasis Surgical – Auckland's premier eye surgery facility – we offer superior treatment and world-class care in a relaxed, friendly environment. Both centres are independently accredited against EQUIP 5 standards for excellence in patient care and services.

Auckland Eye is centrally located in Remuera, with easy motorway access, plentiful off-street parking and wheelchair access. There are additional dedicated consulting facilities in Takapuna and New Lynn, as well as appointments available at a wide range of other locations across the Auckland region.

Auckland Eye is an affiliated provider to Southern Cross Health Society.

For more information on Diabetic Retinopathy, please contact our friendly specialist team.

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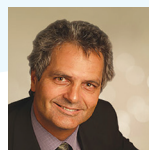
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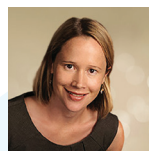
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