

Diabetic Retinopathy

Perfect Sense
Complete Eye Care



DIABETIC RETINOPATHY is the leading cause of new blindness in adults. If you have diabetes, your body does not use and store sugar properly. Over time, diabetes can damage blood vessels in the retina, the nerve layer at the back of the eye that senses light and sends images to the brain.

Background (non-proliferative) Diabetic Retinopathy (BDR) -- an early stage of diabetic retinopathy, where the tiny blood vessels leak fluid. The leaking fluid can cause the retina to swell or to form yellow deposits called exudates. Diabetic Macular Edema (DME) is swelling of the macula, a small area in the center of the retina that allows us to see fine details clearly. It is the most common cause of visual loss in diabetes. Vision loss may be mild to severe depending on the extent of swelling present.

Recommended Treatment:

- Careful blood pressure and blood sugar control
- Regular follow-ups (frequency depends on severity)
- Laser treatment for retinal edema
- Medication for retinal edema



Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy (PDR) – this is a complication of diabetes caused by new blood vessels growing in the eye. High blood sugar levels can severely damage the retinal blood vessels, cutting off the normal flow of blood and oxygen to the retinal tissues. In response, the retina grows new, fragile blood vessels that can leak blood, or create scar tissue that can pull the retina away from its normal position, causing retinal detachments and vision loss. The

diagnosis of PDR necessitates prompt treatment to preserve vision and prevent blindness. Vitreous hemorrhage may also occur with PDR. Blood in the vitreous (the clear gel-like substance that fills the inside of the eye) blocks light rays from reaching the retina. A large hemorrhage might block all vision, leaving only light and dark perception. This may take weeks to months to clear up, or may need to be surgically removed from the eye in a procedure called a vitrectomy to restore sight.



TAKE HOME MESSAGE: A recent study showed that over time, 97% of type 1 diabetics will develop damage in their eyes. Many people with retinopathy have no symptoms but with early detection vision can be saved in many cases. We recommend a dilated eye exam every year for diabetics to detect the onset of problems, and if you need it, our doctors can provide the latest in diagnostic and treatment options for retinopathy.

If you are diabetic, call us to schedule your very important comprehensive eye exam.

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