

## 5 Things You Should Know About Diabetic Eye Disease



Did you know that diabetes can cause eye disease? If left untreated, it can cause vision loss or even blindness. To help you keep your vision healthy, here are five things we would like you to know about diabetic eye disease:

- 1. A group of eye problems** – People with diabetes may face several eye problems as a complication of this disease. They include cataract, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy, which is the leading cause of blindness in American adults age 20-74.
- 2. No symptoms, no pain** – In its early stages, diabetic retinopathy has no symptoms. A person may not notice vision changes until the disease advances. Blurred vision may occur when the macula swells from the leaking fluid (called macular edema). If new vessels have grown on the surface of the retina, they can bleed into the eye, blocking vision.
- 3. Have diabetes? You are at risk** – Anyone with diabetes is at risk of getting diabetic retinopathy. The longer someone has diabetes, the more likely he or she will get this eye disease. In fact, between 40 and 45 percent of those with diagnosed diabetes have some degree of diabetic retinopathy.
- 4. Stay on TRACK** – That is: Take your medications as prescribed by your doctor; Reach and maintain a healthy weight; Add more physical activity to your daily routine; Control your ABC's – A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels; and Kick the smoking habit.
- 5. Get a dilated eye exam** – If you have diabetes, be sure to have a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year. Diabetic eye disease can be detected early and treated before noticeable vision loss occurs.



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*TCCH is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and PHS Sec. 330 grant represents 18% of our total funding. Sliding fee discounts may be available for patients with limited resources. The remainder of our budget is generated from patient fees.*

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# Treasure Coast Community Health

## Diabetic Retinopathy



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## Diabetes & Healthy Eyes

Diabetes is caused when the body cannot or does not control high levels of blood glucose. If you have diabetes, it is very important that you take care of your eyes.

Diabetes can cause diabetic eye disease, which can lead to low vision or blindness. Diabetic eye disease can include:

- Diabetic retinopathy
- Cataracts
- Glaucoma

Low vision means that even with regular glasses, contact lenses, medicine or surgery, people find everyday tasks difficult to do.

A person with diabetes is much more likely to become blind than a person without diabetes.

*Let Treasure Coast Community Health assist you in taking steps to ensure proper eye health.*



Normal Vision



Vision with Diabetic Retinopathy

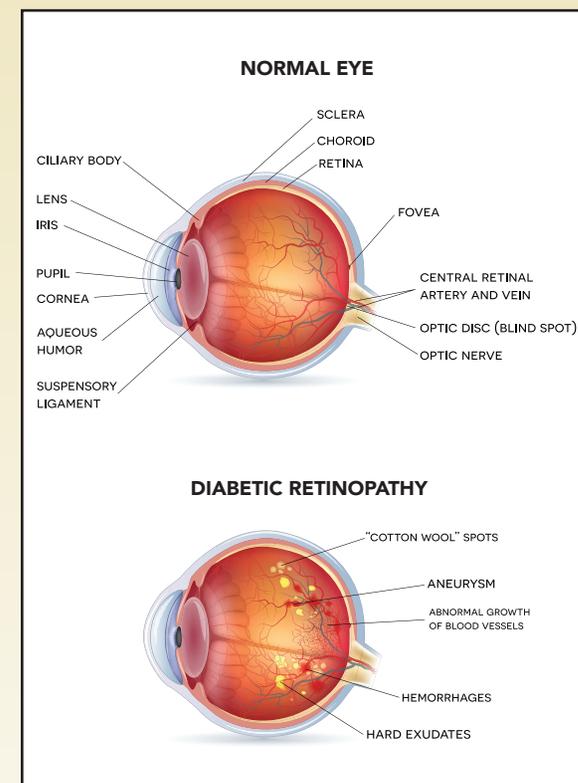
## Diabetic Retinopathy Exam

Some eye diseases do not have symptoms. In many cases, there is no pain and vision may not change until the disease becomes severe. Vision loss may be prevented by finding and treating the disease in its early stages.

It is recommended that a patient with diabetes be screened once a year to determine if there are any changes inside the eye. This test takes a look at the back of the eye and focuses on the Macula, Retina and Optic nerve. It is **not** a test to check vision for glasses.

Before starting the test, the photographer will ask questions related to diabetes, (both personal and family history), and then explain the different objects that they will ask the patient to look for. During this exam, the patient will sit in a chair and rest their chin close to the camera. The lights are turned out for this test. A series of images will be taken of the inside, and then the outside, of each eye. On occasion, a patient with small pupils may need drops placed in the eyes to dilate the pupil. In this case, protective glasses will be given prior to the patient leaving the testing area. Testing takes approximately 15 to 30 minutes. the scheduled appointment time. Please refer to TCCH's appointment policy.

Once the images are taken, they are sent to an eye specialist for interpretation. A report is sent back to your primary care provider with results and recommendations for follow-up.



*Appointments available at our Oslo & Fellsmere locations.*

*Acknowledgment: National Eye Institute, National Eye Health Education Program*

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