Managing your vision while managing your diabetes

If you're one of the estimated 40.1 million people living with diabetes in the United States,[1] you know how important it is to take good care of yourself—monitoring your blood sugar, watching your diet, taking your medication, exercising. But if you haven't yet added an annual eye exam to your routine, you should.

Diabetics are at greater risk for eye problems. However, proper eye care can lead to the early detection and early treatment of vision-related complications, including:

Glaucoma – Glaucoma occurs when increased fluid pressure in the eyes damages the nerve fibers in the optic nerve. While glaucoma can lead to irreversible vision loss, its progression can be slowed if it's detected and treated early. People with diabetes are twice as likely to suffer from glaucoma than people without diabetes. The longer someone has had diabetes, the more common glaucoma is. Risk also increases with age.[2]

Cataracts – A cataract clouds the eye's lens, which blocks the passage of light. The condition is typically associated with aging, but diabetes makes you 2 to 5 times more likely to develop cataracts, and more likely to develop them at a younger age.[3] Regular eye exams can help identify and lead to the treatment of cataracts before they affect your quality of life.

Diabetic Retinopathy – Retinopathy is a leading cause of blindness among working-age adults – it can affect anyone with type 1, type 2 or gestational diabetes.[4] Because its initial symptoms are very slight or even unnoticeable, diabetic retinopathy often goes undiagnosed. However, it can be detected

during an annual comprehensive eye exam. Once detected, it can be treated by laser surgery.

Annual, comprehensive eye exams should be an important part of your diabetic care. These exams can help detect changes in your vision early on, enabling prompt referral and treatment that can lessen the risk of vision loss. In addition, be sure to see your eye care provider if you notice any of the following changes to your vision:

- Blurry, double or cloudy vision
- Pain or pressure in one or both eyes
- Trouble with peripheral vision
- Floating or flashing lights
- Dark spots

Living with diabetes means looking out for your health. When you take care of yourself, you can look forward to better disease management and minimizing vision complications.

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1. “National Diabetes Statistics Report”; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; cdc.gov; January 21, 2026.
2. Werner, M.; "The Relationship Between Diabetes and Glaucoma"; Glaucoma Research Foundation; glaucoma.org; November 2, 2023.
3. “At a glance: Diabetic Retinopathy”; National Eye Institute; nei.nih.gov; September 11, 2025.
4. “Vision Loss and Diabetes"; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; cdc.gov; May 15, 2024.