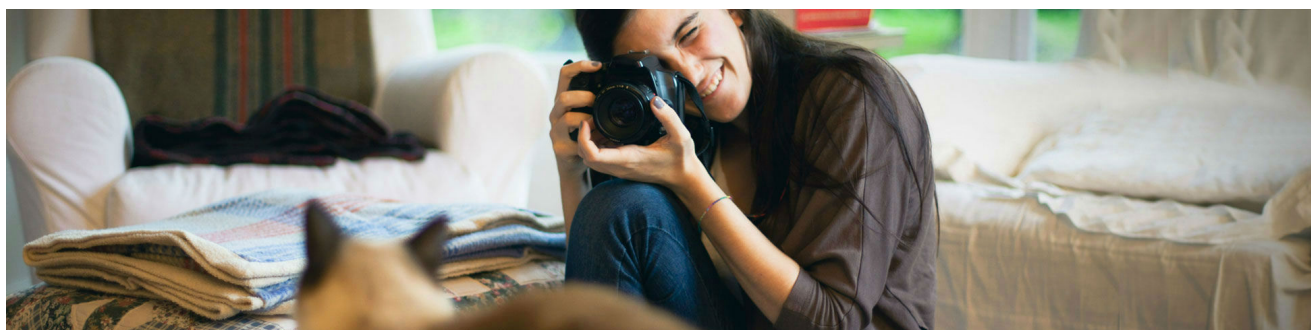


## Diabetes and Your Eyes



### **Time to add an annual eye exam to your routine.**

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If you're one of the more than 37 million Americans with diabetes,<sup>1</sup> you know how important it is to take good care of yourself. That includes watching your blood sugar, watching your diet—and looking out for your eyes.

If you're diabetic, proper eye care can lead to the early detection and early treatment of vision-related complications.

As a diabetic, you're at greater risk for eye problems. In fact, diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in adults ages 20-74.<sup>2</sup> However, proper eye care can lead to the early detection, and early treatment of vision-related complications, including:

**Glaucoma** — If you have diabetes, you are twice as likely to develop Glaucoma compared to people without diabetes.<sup>3</sup> 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.

**Cataracts** — A cataract clouds the eye's lens, which blocks the passage of light. The condition is typically associated with aging. People over 65 with diabetes are twice as likely to develop cataracts than people of the same age without diabetes.<sup>4</sup> Regular eye exams can help identify and lead to the treatment of cataracts before they affect your quality of life.

**Diabetic Retinopathy** — The leading cause of blindness among adults,<sup>5</sup> retinopathy is the most common eye complication in diabetic patients. 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 through proper medication, close monitoring of blood sugar levels, a healthy diet, regular exercise—and regular vision care. When you take care of yourself, you can look forward to better disease management and minimizing vision complications.

1. “The Facts, Stats, and Impacts of Diabetes,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, January 24, 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/library/spotlights/diabetes-facts-stats.html>.
2. “Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness,” Your Track to Health, March 2022, <https://www.ytth.com/WellnessPageContent.aspx?MenuId=172>.
3. “All About Glaucoma in People with Diabetes,” Beyond Type 1, January 28, 2022, <https://beyonddtype1.org/glaucoma-in-people-with-diabetes/>.
4. “Cataracts and diabetes,” Medical News Today, October 11, 2021, <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/cataracts-and-diabetes#summary>.
5. “At a glance: Diabetic Retinopathy,” National Eye Institute, July 30, 2021, <https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/diabetic-retinopathy>.

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