



Diabetes Care Plan: The Diabetic Eye Exam

Why do I need a Diabetic Eye Exam?

Diabetes is a condition that causes high glucose (blood sugar). This elevation in blood sugar causes inflammation and irritation to small blood vessels and nerves. The eyes are a major area that diabetes can affect since there are so many tiny blood vessels. Diabetes puts you at risk for *retinopathy*, which is inflammation of the back portion of the eye and the blood vessels that feed it. You are also at risk for eye conditions such as cataracts and glaucoma.

Wouldn't I notice my vision changing?

Not necessarily. Any of these conditions can begin to occur BEFORE the official diagnosis of diabetes so you may not relate the changes to blood sugar issues. The symptoms are often gradual and hard to notice. Retinopathy can come and go, and the risk is higher if the diabetes is not well controlled.

How likely is this to happen to me?

Over HALF of patients with diabetes will develop retinopathy at some point in their lifetime. It can lead to permanent blindness if not treated. There are treatment options and catching the condition early can help preserve your vision!

Call your eye doctor and get your appointment booked! Let them know you have diabetes as there are specific exams they need to plan enough time for. Ask them to send the visit report to your primary care provider. If you have already seen your eye doctor this year, let your care team know so we can get the report into your chart.

Cannot get in with your eye doctor?

Valley Medical Group has a Diabetes Retinal Clinic where you can have the initial screening performed. It rotates through each of our four health centers, and can be coordinated on a day when you are already coming to the health center. You will not need your eyes dilated, and the screening takes around 15 minutes. Call our office to schedule today!

Get your eyes screened in 2025!