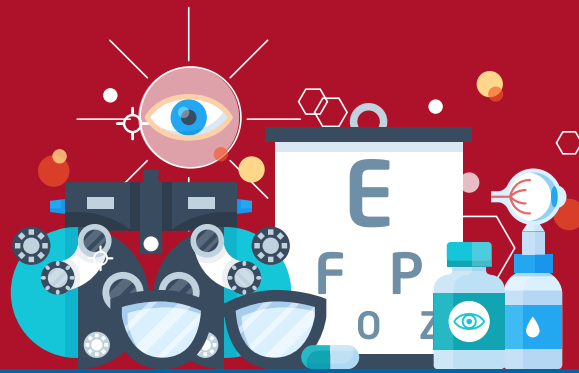


FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT

Diabetic Eye Exams & Retinopathy



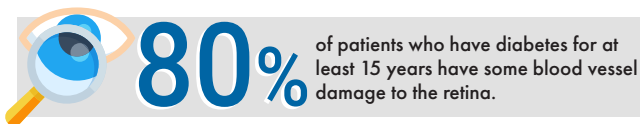
Why are regular eye exams so important for patients with diabetes?

Diabetes mellitus affects many parts of the body but can be particularly devastating to the eyes if the disease is not controlled.

Patients with untreated diabetes are 25 times more at risk for blindness than the general population.



The longer a person has diabetes, the higher the risk of developing diabetic retinopathy.



Patients with Type 1 diabetes are more likely to develop diabetic retinopathy at a younger age. However, with improved methods of diagnosis and treatment, only a small percentage of patients who develop retinopathy have serious vision problems.

What is diabetic retinopathy?

Diabetic retinopathy is among the most common eye complications of diabetes. It is the leading cause of new blindness among adults in the United States, and is caused by changes in the blood vessels of the eye.

Regular eye exams are essential to controlling your diabetes and preventing diabetic retinopathy. You must also monitor your blood pressure, sugar levels and avoid smoking.

Wouldn't I know if I have diabetic retinopathy?

Diabetic retinopathy may be present without any symptoms, so early detection is the best protection against loss of vision.

Diabetic patients should schedule dilated examinations by an ophthalmologist or optometrist at least **once a year.**



How does an eye doctor detect retinopathy?

Your pupils will be dilated during an eye exam. If blood vessel damage is indicated, the doctor will probably take a picture of the blood vessels and track changes over time. If damage is found, your eye doctor may recommend more frequent exams.

How is this different from a "normal" eye exam?

In addition to a comprehensive eye exam to any medical conditions, your eye doctor is also screening for diabetic retinopathy. In some instances, your eye doctor may be able to provide you with an updated eyeglass prescription for an additional charge.

What will this cost me?

- Medicare Part B covers eye exams for diabetic retinopathy once each year if you have diabetes. The exam must be done by an eye doctor who's legally allowed to do the test in your state.
- Medicaid coverage varies by state. Please contact your Medicaid plan to confirm your individual coverage.
- Contact your insurance carrier, using the phone number on the back of your insurance card, for the most up-to-date insurance coverage. If your eye doctor determines that additional testing and/or treatment is necessary, these services could result in additional charges.

NEBRASKA
HEALTH
NETWORK

