

Eye Exams for People With Diabetes

Diabetes and Your Eyesight

Eye diseases related to diabetes are the leading cause of blindness in the United States. Whether you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes, you need to have a dilated eye exam every year. Your eye care provider may recommend eye exams more often if you have a progressive eye disease.

Don't wait until you have symptoms to see your eye care provider. Diabetes-related eye diseases can be severe before you notice any changes in your vision. By getting a dilated eye exam each year, your eye care provider can keep track of changes in your eye health and recommend treatment if you need it.

Your Eye Exam

You should see either an ophthalmologist or optometrist for your yearly eye exam.

Because of your diabetes, you are at greater risk for glaucoma, cataracts and diabetic retinopathy. Your eye care provider will check for these during your exam.

- **glaucoma:** increased pressure in the eye
- **cataracts:** clouding of the lens
- **diabetic retinopathy:** blood leaking or bleeding in the back of the eye.

Diabetic retinopathy is a small blood vessel disease that occurs in people with diabetes. High blood glucose and high blood pressure can change blood vessels in your retina.

Your retina is a thin layer of tissue in the back of your eye. This part of your eye provides sharp, clear vision.

If you develop small blood vessel disease, new blood vessels forming in the back of your eye may be weak. They can leak or bleed, reducing eyesight or causing a total loss of vision.

Signs of Eye Problems

Call your eye care provider right away if you have any of these:

- flashes of light
- floating black spots
- double or blurred vision
- eye pain.

Many people with diabetes do not have any early signs of eye problems.

Preventing Eye Problems

- Keep your blood glucose and blood pressure within your target range.
- Do not smoke.
- Schedule yearly eye exams, or more often if needed.

Making Your Eye Exam Part of Your Medical Record

Your primary care provider will want to see the results of your eye exam and make it part of your medical record. There are 2 steps to make this happen. See the other side for details.

- **You:** Write in the name of your Allina Health clinic and the fax number. Then give this brochure to your eye care provider and request the information about your eye exam be sent to your Allina Health clinic.

Allina Health clinic:

Fax: _____

- **Your eye care provider:** Send the following information to the fax number listed above.

Your name:

Date of birth: _____

Primary care provider:

Eye exam provider:

Date of eye exam: _____

Results of eye exam: _____

___ no retinopathy

___ non-proliferative retinopathy:

___ mild

___ moderate

___ severe

___ proliferative retinopathy

___ macular edema

Comments: