



NORTHERN MINNESOTA EYE CARE

ASK THE OPTOMETRIST

How Does Diabetes Affect the Eye?

Diabetic retinopathy is a condition occurring in persons with diabetes, which causes progressive damage to the retina, the light sensitive lining at the back of the eye. It is a serious sight-threatening complication of diabetes. Diabetic retinopathy is the result of damage to the tiny blood vessels that nourish the retina. They leak blood and other fluids that cause swelling of retinal tissue and clouding of vision. The condition usually affects both eyes. The longer a person has diabetes, the more likely they will develop diabetic retinopathy. If left untreated, diabetic retinopathy can cause blindness.

Symptoms of diabetic retinopathy include:

- Seeing spots or floaters in your field of vision
- Blurred vision
- Having a dark or empty spot in the center of your vision
- Difficulty seeing well at night

In patients with diabetes, prolonged periods of high blood sugar can lead to the accumulation of fluid in the lens inside the eye that controls eye focusing. This changes the curvature of the lens and results in the development of symptoms of blurred vision.

If you are a diabetic, you can help prevent or slow the development of diabetic retinopathy by taking your prescribed medication, sticking to your diet, exercising regularly, controlling high blood pressure and avoiding alcohol and smoking.

Often there are no visual symptoms in the early stages of diabetic retinopathy. That is why the American Optometric Association recommends that everyone with diabetes have a comprehensive dilated eye examination once a year. Early detection and treatment can limit the potential for significant vision loss from diabetic retinopathy. Make an appointment with an optometrist today at Northern Minnesota Eye Care for a Diabetic Eye Exam.

**Appointments available Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 9:00 - 4:00
Thursday from 9:00 - 6:00**

Walk-ins also available. Most insurances are accepted.

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