

# FAQs: Diabetes and Eye Health

## WHO IS AT RISK OF DEVELOPING DIABETES-RELATED EYE DISEASE?

Anyone with diabetes is at risk of developing diabetes-related eye disease.

The longer you have diabetes, the more likely you are to develop diabetes-related eye disease. If you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or smoke tobacco, you are also at increased risk of developing diabetes-related eye disease.

## HOW DOES DIABETES AFFECT VISION?

When your blood glucose (blood sugar) levels are above target range, over time, this can affect the blood vessels in your eyes, leading to diabetes-related eye disease.

As the blood vessels in the back of your eye are weakened, they can start to leak fluid, resulting in blurry or cloudy vision.

## HOW IS VISION LOSS PREVENTED?

Getting your yearly eye exam will allow your eye doctor to keep track of the health of your eyes and begin treatment if they see signs of complications. If diabetes-related eye disease is diagnosed early, treatment is easier and more likely to be effective.

The best way you can prevent or delay vision loss is by managing your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. Work with your health care team to be sure your treatment plan is working well and you can reach your health targets. And if you smoke, get help to quit.

*Here are some resources to help you quit smoking: [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov) and 1-800-QUIT-NOW*

## HOW DO YOU FIND OUT IF YOU HAVE DIABETES-RELATED RETINOPATHY?

Signs of diabetes-related retinopathy are found with a dilated and comprehensive eye exam or retinal photography. It is important to find signs of retinopathy as early as possible since early treatment will let you start treating it to prevent or delay vision loss. Most people should have an eye exam every year.

## HOW IS DIABETES-RELATED RETINOPATHY TREATED?

Taking steps to manage blood glucose levels and blood pressure helps to slow the progression of diabetes-related retinopathy. Treatment options include eye injections, laser treatment, or surgery.

**Contact your eye doctor today to schedule your eye exam.** To learn more about eye health and find an eye doctor near you, **scan the QR code** or visit **[diabetes.org/eyehealth](http://diabetes.org/eyehealth)**.

