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WELLNESS
WEEKLY

How Can Diabetes Effect Your Eyes?

If you have diabetes, regular visits to your ophthalmologist for eye exams are important. High blood sugar (glucose) increases the risk of diabetes eye problems. In fact, diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in adults age 20 to 74.

If you have eye problems and diabetes, don't buy a new pair of glasses when you notice you have blurred vision. It could just be a temporary eye problem that develops rapidly with diabetes and is caused by high blood sugar levels. High blood sugar in diabetes causes the lens of the eye to swell, which changes your ability to see. To correct this kind of eye problem, you need to get your blood sugar back into the target range (90-130 milligrams per deciliter or mg/dL before meals, and less than 180 mg/dL one to two hours after a meal). It may take as long as three months after your blood sugar is well controlled for your vision to fully get back to normal.



Blurred vision can also be a more serious symptom of a diabetes eye problem. Three major eye problems people with diabetes may develop and should be aware of are cataracts, glaucoma, and retinopathy.

How Can I Prevent Eye Problems With Diabetes?

The American Diabetes Association offers these eye care guidelines for people with diabetes to help prevent eye problems:

- People with type 1 diabetes should have a dilated eye exam by an ophthalmologist or optometrist within three to five years after diagnosis.
- People with type 2 diabetes should have a dilated eye exam by an ophthalmologist or optometrist shortly after diagnosis.
- Annual eye exams should be done with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes by an ophthalmologist or optometrist; more frequently if necessary.
- When considering pregnancy, women with a history of diabetes should have an eye exam prior to and during pregnancy. This does not pertain to women with gestational diabetes.

To prevent eye problems in diabetes, you should:

- Control your blood sugar
- Control high blood pressure

When to Contact Your Doctor About Eye Problems in Diabetes

If you have diabetes, contact your doctor about any eye problems if any of the following occur:

- Black spots in your vision.
- Flashes of light.
- "Holes" in your vision.
- Blurred vision.

**NOVEMBER:
AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH**