

DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

WHAT IS DIABETIC RETINOPATHY?

Diabetes causes damage to small blood vessels throughout the body, including the retina. The retina is the delicate tissue lining inside of the eye that receives light and transmits images to the brain. In diabetic retinopathy, damage from these deteriorating blood vessels can cause visual problems.

TWO TYPES OF DIABETIC RETINOPATHY.

The first type is background diabetic retinopathy (BDR) and is caused by leakage from the retinal blood vessels. Some of the small blood vessels narrow or close, while others enlarge and form balloon-like sacs. These blood vessels both hemorrhage and leak, causing swelling and the formation of deposits called exudates, causing decreased vision.

Another type is proliferative diabetic retinopathy (PDR) which occurs when there is damage to the retinal blood vessels causes the secretion of a substance called vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF). VEGF causes abnormal blood vessels to grow on the surface of the retina and elsewhere in the eye. These vessels bleed easily and may also pull on the retina, causing retinal traction and detachment. They often grow to the point where they threaten vision even without the individual knowing that there is anything wrong.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF DIABETIC RETINOPATHY?

Early in the course of diabetes, leaking or bleeding in the retina may be visible to a doctor even before vision is affected. Blurry vision may indicate swelling in the retina. When bleeding occurs, vision may become very cloudy or be completely lost.

EVALUATING DIABETIC RETINOPATHY.

A thorough retinal examination will determine the health of your eyes and any decrease in visual function. A complete diabetic evaluation often includes a test called fluorescein angiography.

vessels in the retina. The results can identify and help the physicians to evaluate areas of leakage or new vessel formation. These results can also help guide laser surgery which may be needed.

TREATING DIABETIC RETINOPATHY.

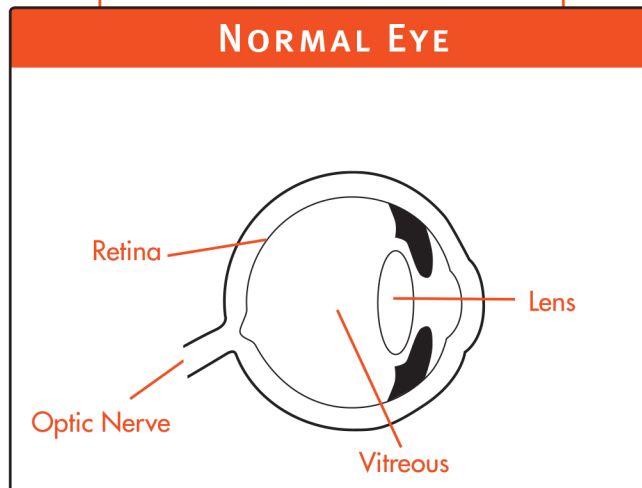
Diabetics are 25 times more likely to become blind than non-diabetic patients. Evaluation and treatment can significantly reduce this risk. Today, the mainstay of treatment is laser surgery, a procedure that involves focusing a powerful beam of laser light energy onto the retina. Selective destruction or sealing of leaking areas

of the damaged retina may be achieved. Laser treatment is often helpful in lowering the risk of future vision loss and maintaining your present vision for as long as possible. This treatment requires no incisions and may be performed in the doctor's office.

SEE THE DIFFERENCE.

It is very important to see an eye care professional, every 2 years if you are over the age of 55. The

doctors at MidWest Eye Center are experienced in the medical and/or surgical treatment for cataract, glaucoma, laser, refractive and cosmetic surgeries.



Testing involves injecting a water-soluble dye into a small vein on the hand or arm and taking a series of high-speed, specially filtered photographs of the blood



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