

Diabetes and your Eyes

People with diabetes can have problems with their eyes. Diabetic eye disease can be mild, which means you have small changes in your vision. Diabetic eye disease can also be severe, which means you could lose your vision completely. It is important to have regular eye exams with your eye doctor (optometrist or ophthalmologist) so that problems can be prevented or treated quickly. Regular eye checks and early treatment can greatly lower your risk of severe eye problems.

Follow these tips for healthy eyes:

It is important to always get a complete eye exam using special eye drops to help the eye doctor see into the back of your eye (dilation).

If you were recently diagnosed with diabetes you should get a complete eye exam:

- **Within 5 years** of when you were told that you have type 1 diabetes.
- **As soon as possible** after you were told that you have type 2 diabetes.

People with type 1 and type 2 diabetes should then get a complete eye exam every year.



Also:

- Take your diabetes medicines as your provider tells you to
- Exercise as you are able
- Eat healthy foods
- Keep a healthy weight
- Manage your blood sugars and blood pressure

See your eye doctor (optometrist) if you have:

Changes in your vision:

- Blurred vision
- Spots in your vision
- Loss of vision

Diabetic Eye Problems:

Eye Problem	What it means
Diabetic Retinopathy	Leaking and bleeding inside your eye
Macular Edema	Swelling in your eye
Cataracts	Changes in your lens (at the front of your eye) causing cloudy vision
Glaucoma	An increase in pressure in your eye, which affects your side vision
Blindness	Losing your vision partly or completely

Remember:

Watch your health closely (see below) to keep eye problems from happening. Use the chart below to see how you are doing.

Test	Goal	My Last Value
HbA1c	Less than 7%	
Blood pressure	Less than 140/90 mm/Hg	
LDL (Bad cholesterol)	Less than 100 mg/dL	
Do I smoke?	Never	

When you notice any problem with your eyes or vision, see your eye doctor (optometrist) right away.