

How can I reduce the risk of getting diabetic eye disease?

You can reduce your risk of getting diabetic eye disease by:

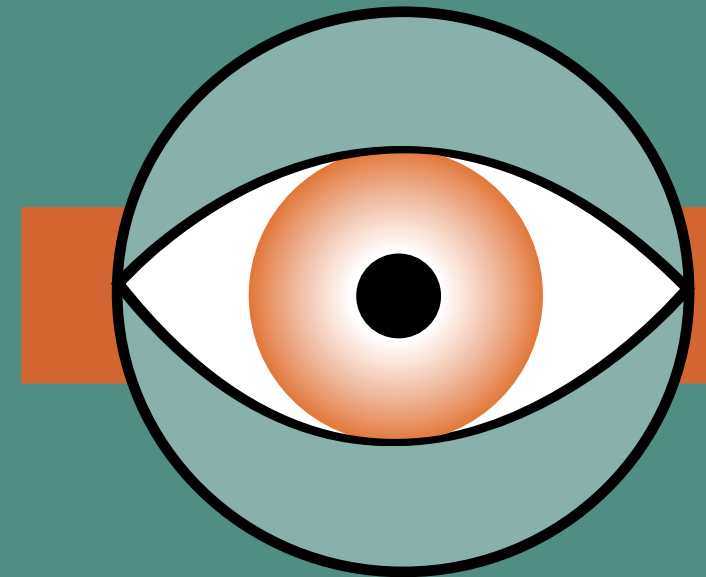
- controlling your blood glucose as effectively as possible
- seeing your doctor regularly to check that your blood pressure is not raised
- attending your diabetic eye screening appointments
- getting professional health advice if you have any problems with your sight
- taking your medication as prescribed.



Remember:

Diabetic eye checks are only one part of managing your diabetes, just like visiting your GP, diabetes nurse and podiatrist. Diabetic retinopathy is preventable and treatable if found early.

Screening for Diabetic Eye Disease



People with diabetes are at risk of developing diabetic eye disease (also known as diabetic retinopathy). This is one of the most common causes of sight loss in adults, but with early diagnosis and treatment, early damage can be reduced or avoided.

If you have just been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, your GP should organise an eye check appointment for you.

Your first screening should happen within 90 days and is an important part of your diabetes care. Treatment is most effective at reducing or preventing damage to your eyes if the condition is caught early.

You should have a check at least every two to three years if your diabetes is very controlled.

Your optometrist or ophthalmologist will tell you if you need to have your eyes checked more often. Screening can detect the condition early, before you notice any changes to your vision.



What is diabetic eye disease?

Diabetic retinopathy occurs when diabetes affects small blood vessels, damaging the part of the eye called the retina. Diabetes can cause the blood vessels in your retina to leak or become blocked and can affect your sight.

Often, these changes are not sight-threatening, but they need to be checked regularly. Their presence means special attention should be given to your blood glucose control and treatment of other medical conditions, such as high blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

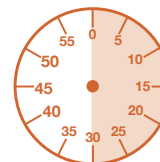


Remember:

This is not a full eye check for glasses or other eye problems. It is just a check for diabetic eye disease. You should continue to visit your optometrist regularly for a full eye examination.

What will happen?

- Your GP will refer you to an eye-screening service.
- Your eye check appointment will take about 30 minutes.



- The person checking your eyes may ask if they can put drops in your eyes to temporarily make your pupils larger.



You can choose whether you will have the drops put in or not as they may sting. Sometimes it is necessary in order to get an accurate picture, and sometimes it is not – the person checking your eyes will be able to guide you in this decision.

- Photographs will be taken of the back of your eyes. The camera does not touch your eyes.



- A letter will be sent to you and your GP within three weeks to let you know your results and when to have another check.



What do I need to think about on the day?

- Bring all the glasses and contact lenses you wear along with contact lens solution.
- Bring sunglasses because your eyes may feel sensitive after the eye drops.
- Plan how you can get home safely after your appointment because your sight might be impaired by the eye drops for a short while after your appointment.

