

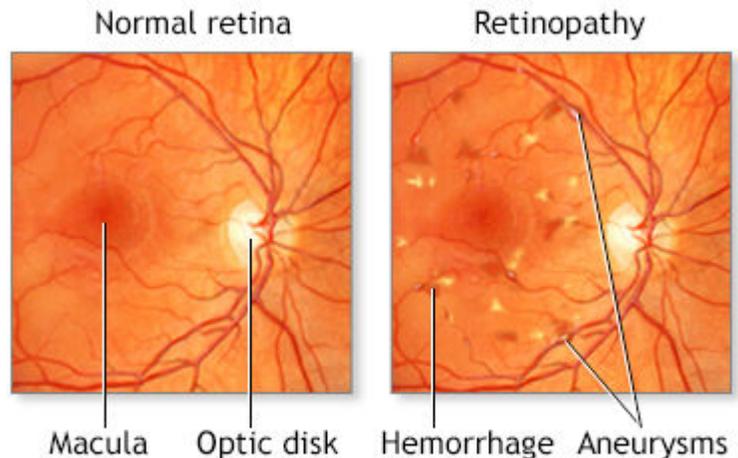
Diabetes eye exams

Description

Diabetes can harm your eyes. It can damage the small blood vessels in your retina, the back wall of your eyeball. This condition is called diabetic retinopathy.

Diabetes also increases your risk of glaucoma and other eye problems.

You may not notice that your eyes are damaged until the problem is very bad. Your doctor can catch problems early if you get regular eye exams. This is very important. The early stages of diabetic retinopathy don't cause changes in vision and you won't have symptoms. Only an eye exam can detect the problem, so that steps can be taken to prevent the eye damage from getting worse.



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You Need Regular eye Exams

Even if the doctor who takes care of your diabetes checks your eyes, you need an eye exam every 1 to 2 years by an eye doctor who takes care of people with diabetes. An eye doctor has equipment that can check the back of your eye much better than your regular doctor can.

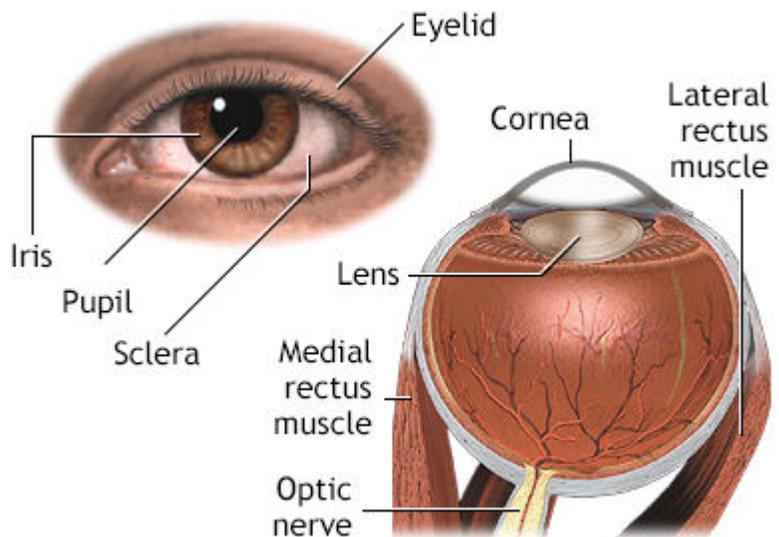
If you have eye problems because of diabetes, you will probably see your eye doctor more often. You may need special treatment to prevent your eye problems from getting worse.

You may see two different types of eye doctors:

- An ophthalmologist is a medical doctor who is an eye specialist.
- An optometrist is a doctor of optometry. Once you have eye disease caused by diabetes, you will likely also see an ophthalmologist.

What is a Dilated Retinal Exam?

The doctor will check your vision using a chart of random letters of different sizes. This is called the



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see the back of the eye. You may feel stinging when the drops are first placed. You may have a metallic taste in your mouth.

To see the back of your eye, the doctor looks through a special magnifying glass using a bright light. The doctor can then see areas that may be damaged by diabetes:

- Blood vessels in the front or middle parts of the eye
- The back of the eye
- The optic nerve area

Another device called a slit lamp is used to see the clear surface of the eye (cornea).

The doctor may take photos of the back of your eye to get a more detailed exam. This exam is called a digital retinal scan (or imaging). A special camera is used to take photos of your retina without dilating your eyes. The doctor then views the photos and lets you know if you need more tests or treatment.

After Your eye Exam

If you had drops to dilate your eyes, your vision will be blurred for about 6 hours. It will be harder to focus on things that are near. You should have someone drive you home.

Also, sunlight can damage your eye more easily when your pupils are dilated. Wear dark glasses or shade your eyes until the effects of the drops wear off.

Alternative Names

Diabetic retinopathy - eye exams; Diabetes - eye exams; Glaucoma - diabetic eye exam; Macular edema - diabetic eye exam

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Reviewed By: Brent Wisse, MD, board certified in Metabolism/Endocrinology, Seattle, WA. Also reviewed by David Zieve, MD, MHA, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.



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