

# Why To Get Your Annual Eye Exam



If you have diabetes, our clinical staff will ask you at each visit if you are current with your annual dilated eye exam. Why? Obtaining this exam regularly is crucial to preventing blindness. If you have diabetes, your risk of eye disease and losing vision is much higher. This annual eye exam is the best thing you can do to prevent blindness. No one wants to lose their sight, yet more than half of people with diabetes do not get this annual eye exam even though their insurance will cover it.

If you are one of those people avoiding the eye exam.... please read on.

## Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetes can lead to small blood vessel disease .... and, your eyes have small blood vessels. The longer you have diabetes that is not controlled, the more likely you are to get Diabetic Retinopathy. Small blood vessels weaken and get damaged over time when there is a high blood sugar (glucose) presence. This can result in problems such as:

- Small blow-out swelling of blood vessels (microaneurysms)
- Small leaks of fluid from damaged blood vessels (exudates)
- Small bleed from damaged blood vessels (hemorrhages)
- Blood vessels may just become blocked.

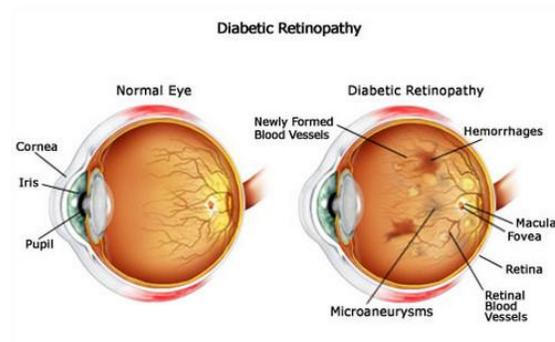
This can cut off the blood and oxygen supply to small sections of the retina

- New abnormal blood vessels may grow from damaged blood vessels. This is called proliferative retinopathy. These new vessels are delicate and can bleed easily.

By getting these annual exams, the doctor can detect changes early. There are now treatments that can prevent further damage and prevent blindness.

## What Can I Do?

Let's start with a look at your diet. Certain foods are found to lower the risks related to eye health for diabetics. Summarizing recent research on nutritional recommendations by Camille



Peri for WebMd.com found that people eating fish just two times per week had a lower risk of macular degeneration. Those that ate a lot of green leafy vegetables, which are high in lutein and zeaxanthin, had a lower risk of advanced macular degeneration.

The bottom line is you need to protect your eyes:

- Get your dilated eye exam every year or as recommended by your ophthalmologist.
- Eat green leafy vegetables and fish.

#### Lutein-Rich Vegetables and Fruits

- Kale
- Spinach
- Swiss Chard
- Collard Greens
- Peas
- Romaine Lettuce
- Brussel Sprouts
- Zucchini
- Broccoli
- Yellow Corn
- Asparagus
- Green Beans
- Iceberg Lettuce
- Nectarine
- Orange



To read more about Good Foods for Eye Health by Camille Peri, please visit [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com).