

Your Health & Well Being



Keep an Eye on Your Eyes

According to the Glaucoma Foundation, the disease glaucoma is called the “sneak thief of sight” because it strikes without obvious symptoms. Therefore, the person with glaucoma is usually unaware of it until serious loss of vision has occurred. In fact, half of those suffering damage from glaucoma do not know it. Currently, damage from glaucoma cannot be reversed.

In a healthy eye, fluid that circulates through the eye and normally drains off through a mesh of tissues starts to build up in the eye and does not properly drain off. This increase in fluid pressure damages the optic nerve leading to vision loss and blindness if not treated. Glaucoma can be chronic, happening gradually over time, or acute with symptoms occurring suddenly.

Everyone should be concerned about glaucoma and its effects, according to the Glaucoma Foundation. It is important for everyone, from infants to senior citizens, to have their eyes checked regularly, because early detection and treatment of glaucoma are the only ways to prevent vision impairment and blindness.

Those especially at risk include persons:

- with a family history of glaucoma
- over age 45 who have not had their eyes examined regularly
- who have abnormally high intraocular pressure
- of African descent
- with diabetes
- who have myopia (nearsightedness)
- who have had a previous eye injury
- have had regular, long-term steroid/cortisone use.

Learn about your family's health history, looking for glaucoma, or for signs of undiagnosed glaucoma. Once the risk is identified, prevention is the next step. Screening for glaucoma is standard in an eye exam. And for more information, visit the Glaucoma Foundation at <http://www.glaucoma-foundation.org>.

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