



## Diabetic Retinopathy

If you have diabetes, you probably know that your body can't use or store sugar properly. When your blood sugar gets too high, it can damage the blood vessels in your eyes. This damage may lead to diabetic retinopathy.

In fact, the longer someone has diabetes, the more likely he/she is to have retinopathy. Everyone who has diabetes is at risk for developing diabetic retinopathy, but not all diabetics do develop it. In its early stages, you may not notice any change in your vision, but it can lead to the later, sight-threatening form of the disease.

Floaters can be a sign of diabetic retinopathy. Sometimes difficulty reading or doing close work can indicate that fluid is collecting in the macula, the most light-sensitive part of the retina. Another sign is double vision, which occurs when the nerves controlling the eye muscles are affected. According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, 95% of those with significant diabetic retinopathy can avoid substantial vision loss if they are treated in time.

The possibility of early detection is why it is so important for diabetics to have a dilated eye exam at least once a year. Diabetic retinopathy can be treated with laser photocoagulation to seal off leaking blood vessels and destroy new growth. Laser photocoagulation doesn't cause pain, because the retina does not contain nerve endings.