

# Eye on Health

## When Dealing With Diabetes, See The Doctor About Your Eyes

### OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF MIND

An unseen complication of diabetes



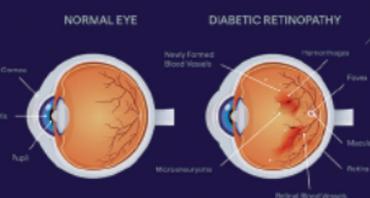
A GLOBAL EPIDEMIC

**463**  
**MILLION**

People in the world living with diabetes<sup>1</sup>

#### WHAT IS DIABETIC RETINOPATHY?

Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness among adults 20 to 74 years of age.<sup>2</sup>



Diabetic retinopathy occurs when high blood sugar levels damage the blood vessels in the retina, causing them to leak or hemorrhage, ultimately distorting vision once progressed to severe levels.

Diabetic macular edema (DME) is the swelling of fluid in the macula. DME is a consequence of diabetic retinopathy and is responsible for about 50% of vision loss associated with diabetic retinopathy.<sup>3</sup>

**50%**

#### WHO IS AT RISK?

Up to 80% of individuals with diabetes will eventually develop some stage of diabetic retinopathy.<sup>4</sup>

The longer a person has diabetes, the more likely they are to develop diabetic retinopathy.

#### THERE ARE NO EARLY SYMPTOMS

There are typically no symptoms in the early stages of diabetic retinopathy, allowing the disease to progress until it affects vision. Once symptoms appear, vision loss may be permanent, even with treatment.

Symptoms that indicate advanced stages of diabetic retinopathy:

- Blurry vision
- Flashes around lights
- Loss of central vision
- Loss of color vision
- Floating spots



(NAPS)—According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one in 10 Americans can expect to be diagnosed with diabetes. If you or someone you care about is ever among them, you may be surprised to learn that one of the most important ways your doctor can help detect the condition is with an eye exam.

#### The Problem

That's because a serious complication of diabetes is diabetic retinopathy. The disease causes damage to the blood vessels in the back of the eye. It can affect up to 80 percent of patients living with diabetes and is the leading cause of blindness amongst working age adults. It can affect up to 80 percent of people with diabetes. Diabetic retinopathy has no early warning signs, and symptoms such as blurred vision do not occur until diabetic retinopathy is in an advanced state.

#### What Can Be Done

Fortunately, early detection and timely treatment can reduce the risk of vision loss due to diabetic retinopathy by 95%. Primary Care physicians now have access to a simple and affordable solution called the Welch Allyn® RetinaVue® Care delivery model, available from Henry Schein. The RetinaVue care delivery model is a turnkey solution that consists of three core components, including the RetinaVue 700 Imager, RetinaVue Network software for secure transfer of patient images and Professional Medical Services to analyze and diagnose patient images. and networks the doctors already have. The imager's ease of use and lightweight, portable

#### EARLY DETECTION IS KEY

Even though 95% of vision loss cases are preventable with early detection and treatment,<sup>5</sup> only about 60% of patients with diabetes visit the eye specialist for annual retinal exams.<sup>3,6</sup>

All patients living with diabetes should receive an annual diabetic retinal exam with an ophthalmologist or optometrist.



#### HOW Teleretinal IMAGING CAN HELP

If you have not had a diabetic retinal exam by an ophthalmologist or optometrist in the past 12 months, you may be able to receive a teleretinal exam as part of your regular doctor visit.

Offering teleretinal exams in your doctor's office helps ensure those who need a diabetic retinal exam get checked every year.<sup>7</sup>



#### SAVE YOUR SIGHT

Speak with your doctor to learn more about the benefits of teleretinal exams and comprehensive eye exams by an eye specialist. As always, be sure to follow your doctor's treatment plan.



References: 1. American Diabetes Association. 2014. Diabetes Statistics 2014. 2. American Diabetes Association. 2014. Diabetes Statistics 2014. 3. American Diabetes Association. 2014. Diabetes Statistics 2014. 4. American Diabetes Association. 2014. Diabetes Statistics 2014. 5. American Diabetes Association. 2014. Diabetes Statistics 2014. 6. American Diabetes Association. 2014. Diabetes Statistics 2014. 7. American Diabetes Association. 2014. Diabetes Statistics 2014.

### Doctors can help people with diabetes save their sight by taking a photograph of the back of their eyes.

design make it well-suited for use across clinics, at the bedside or even in the home. In a fast and non-invasive procedure, your primary care physician can take a photo of your retina and send it to an ophthalmologist to analyze the blood vessels there. Thanks to this technology, you won't even need to leave the doctor's office and may not need to make another appointment with the ophthalmologist, although doctors do recommend that anyone living with diabetes get an annual retinal exam.

#### What Else You Can Do

Managing your diabetes is the best way to lower your risk of diabetic retinopathy, advises the National Institutes of Health. That means keeping your blood sugar levels in a healthy range. You can do this by:

- Getting regular physical activity,
- Eating healthy
- Carefully following your doctor's instructions about taking insulin or other diabetes medicines.

Treatments include injections of drugs that can slow or even reverse the damage; laser treatment to shrink retinal blood vessels; and a type of eye surgery called vitrectomy that replaces the vitreous humor with another clear fluid.

#### Learn More

For further facts on diabetic retinopathy, you can visit the National Institutes of Health at [www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/diabetic-retinopathy](http://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/diabetic-retinopathy). Doctors and patients can find more information on the RetinaVue care delivery model at [www.retinaVue.com](http://www.retinaVue.com).