

## Glaucoma

### What is glaucoma?

Glaucoma (glaw-KOH-muh) is a disease that damages the nerve in the back of your eye called the optic nerve.

### What causes it?

Usually, increased pressure in your eye causes glaucoma. Some people with this disease have eyes that are harmed more easily, even with normal eye pressure. Some people don't have glaucoma but are at higher risk of getting it.

### How is glaucoma treated?

People with glaucoma and those who are at a higher risk of getting glaucoma should visit an eye doctor regularly. People who have a higher chance of getting glaucoma include:

- People with a family member who has glaucoma,
- People with diabetes,
- People of African, Hispanic, or Asian descent, especially those older than 50 years.

If you are in one of these groups, talk to your primary care doctor about vision testing and seeing an eye doctor. Your eye doctor will check how well you see things, look into your eye, check the pressure in your eye, and perform other tests. People with glaucoma usually need to use eye drops to lower their eye pressure. You must use your eyedrops as your doctor tells you. Some people with glaucoma have laser treatments or eye surgery to lower their eye pressure. Regular follow-up visits are important.

### Why is treating glaucoma important?

Glaucoma can cause vision loss and blindness. Early in the disease, people with glaucoma have no symptoms. They do not notice vision problems until the optic nerve is already harmed. This harm happens slowly. Waiting to have your eyes checked until you notice eyesight problems is too late. If you have glaucoma, lowering the pressure in your eye helps save your vision.

Regular follow-up visits can help the eye doctor know which treatment is best for you. Your doctor can tell if your treatment needs to change and can help if you have side effects from your treatment. Using eye drops as prescribed is the best way to save your vision. Surgery is an important part of treatment, but it does not cure glaucoma forever. A person who has surgery for glaucoma still needs to see an eye doctor regularly.

### Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

American Academy of Ophthalmology

<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/glaucoma-eyedrop-medicine>

<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-glaucoma>

Cleveland Clinic

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/4212-glaucoma>

Glaucoma Research Foundation

<https://glaucoma.org/learn-about-glaucoma/patient-resources>

National Institutes of Health

[https://www.nei.nih.gov/sites/default/files/neh-pdfs/GAM2012\\_Dont\\_Lose\\_Handout\\_Eng.pdf](https://www.nei.nih.gov/sites/default/files/neh-pdfs/GAM2012_Dont_Lose_Handout_Eng.pdf)

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