



**Wolverhampton  
Diabetes Care**

## The Eye Complications

People with Diabetes may develop various eye problems with diabetes.

### What can it affect?

This includes cataracts where the eye lens becomes cloudy and glaucoma where the eye pressure goes up. Both can cause loss of vision and need to be found and treated. Diabetes also causes retinopathy.

### What is Retinopathy?

The retina is the light sensitive lining of the back of the eye. Retinopathy occurs when the smallest blood vessels become blocked, leaky or bleed. This is painless and may not initially affect the vision. Left untreated retinopathy may damage vision and cause blindness.

### Getting your eyes tested?

It is important to get your eyes checked at least once a year. This can help detect problems early and save vision. You are entitled to a free annual eye test at the opticians if you have diabetes. Make use of this. Inform your optician that you have diabetes. Your diabetes eye check is special and should be done by an Optician or other trained professional. Your diabetes eye test should be organised as part of the Retinopathy Screening Programme. Ask if this is the case. The information is recorded and any follow on care needed organised.

### The eye test?

This includes the usual eye test for vision (reading letters from a chart) and a pressure check for glaucoma. You also have an examination to look at the retina. The back of the eye will be seen and a photograph may be taken using a special camera. This will show any changes that need to be monitored or treated. A record is kept for the future.

### Eye drops?

To view the retina, it is necessary to dilate the pupils (make them bigger) with drops. These may sting a little. You should not have these eye drops, without special supervision, if you have glaucoma, recent eye surgery or cataract surgery prior to 1990. Ask about this. Following the drops you may be more sensitive to light. Do not drive for 4 hours after. If you get any redness or severe pain, report to a doctor immediately but this is unlikely.

### How is Retinopathy treated?

Retinopathy in early stages is treated by blood pressure and diabetes control. At a more serious stage, you will need to see an eye specialist to decide on laser treatment. This is usually painless and normally carried out at an outpatients department by eye specialists. The laser light helps reverse blood vessel damage especially if given early. Following the treatment you may have blurred vision or be sensitive to light for a short time. You should not drive home following laser treatment.

## Seeking advice and what care to expect

At the very least you should have an annual special eye test.

Your medical team and Optician will join you to the Eye screening Programme. You can also join your self by telling the Optician you have diabetes and need the annual special diabetes eye test. If you have retinopathy, ask about your diabetes and blood pressure control. You should be checked for other the diabetes problems and complications. If you have serious retinopathy, you should be under the care of the specialist eye service.

Report to your medical team immediately if you think there is a sudden new problem with your vision.