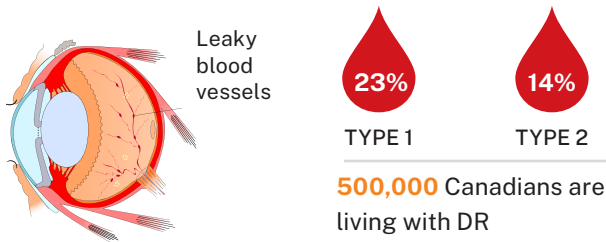




# What is Diabetic Retinopathy?

**Diabetic retinopathy (DR) occurs when blood vessels in the retina are damaged.**

Who is at risk? According to Diabetes Canada, DR affects **23%** of people with type 1 diabetes and **14%** of people with type 2 diabetes.



**What are the risk factors for developing DR?**



## Symptoms

Diabetic retinopathy may cause no symptoms initially, but as the disease progresses, symptoms may include:

- Loss of central vision
- Blurry vision
- Flashes of light in field of vision
- Inability to see colours
- Black spots or holes in vision



## How is DR treated?

In the early stages, DR can be managed by controlling blood sugar levels and blood pressure. However, as DR progresses, options to maintain vision include anti-VEGF injections, laser treatment or surgery. Early detection of diabetic retinopathy is crucial, as treatment is much more likely to be successful at an early stage.

## How can DR be prevented?

- Monitor and maintain control of your diabetes.
- See your doctor regularly and follow instructions about diet, exercise and medication.
- See your optometrist for a **thorough eye examination** when you are first diagnosed with diabetes, and annually thereafter.

**How is DR diagnosed?** DR is diagnosed through a comprehensive eye exam by your optometrist. The exam may include:

