


Canadian Ophthalmological Society
Société canadienne d'ophtalmologie
EYE PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA | MÉDECINS ET CHIRURGIENS OPHTHALMOLOGISTES DU CANADA



◀◀ **Your Eyes** and Diabetes ▶▶

**OPEN YOUR EYES
TO AN EYE EXAM**

 Recognize your diabetes-related risks.
Book an appointment today.




Canadian Ophthalmological Society
Société canadienne d'ophtalmologie

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Canadian Retina Society
Société canadienne de la Rétine

 CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES OPTOMÉTRISTES

 EYE PHYSICIANS
AND SURGEONS
OF ONTARIO

DIABETES CANADA | **DIABÈTE CANADA**



 The FOUNDATION
FIGHTING BLINDNESS



1 How can diabetes affect my eyes?

- Diabetes can cause “Diabetic Retinopathy” (DR)
- DR is the most common diabetic eye disease affecting 500,000 Canadians¹
- Having too much sugar in your blood can damage the blood vessels in the retina, leading to DR (see Figure 1)
- The retina is the tissue lining the back of the eye and works like the film in a camera that helps you see
- Changes to your eye with DR can reduce your vision (see Figure 2)
- For more information about DR, go to www.eyecandoit.org

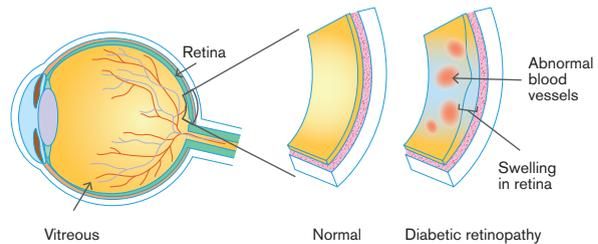


Figure 1. Diabetic retinopathy (DR).

Eye exams are part of managing your diabetes. Early detection and treatment of DR can reduce the risk of blindness by 95 percent.²



Figure 2. Vision with progressing DR. Used with permission from CNIB.³

2 Why should I get an eye exam?

- Diabetes can affect your eyes which can affect your vision over time
- Keeping blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol at target may prevent or decrease the risk of DR
- Regular eye exams are very important; sometimes, damage to eyes happens even before the diagnosis of diabetes
- Changes can be detected early by regular eye exams, even before you see any difference in your vision

- Getting regular eye exams is part of your complete diabetes management

3 How do I get an eye exam?

- A diabetic eye exam can be performed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist
- Contact your eye care professional directly for an appointment or have your health care provider refer you for an eye exam

4 What happens during an eye exam?

- Drops are put into your eyes to dilate your pupils (i.e., make them larger)
 - The drops may sting a bit
- Once your eyes are dilated, your eye care provider examines your eyes using a special magnifying lens that provides a clear view of the back of the eye
- Dilated eye exams are a safe and effective part of managing your diabetes
- It is a small commitment of time to help keep your eyesight!



A diabetic eye exam may be available at no cost to you.

5 Do I have to pay for an eye exam if I have diabetes?

- A diabetic eye exam may be covered by your provincial health plan and available at no cost to you* – you will want to confirm in your province (e.g., the diabetic eye exam is covered in Ontario)

* Your eye care provider may offer retinal photos as a permanent record of your exam results at an extra cost.

6 How often is an eye exam recommended?

- If your vision changes, you should go see your eye doctor immediately
- If your vision is doing well, you should get an eye exam **once a year**, unless otherwise directed by your ophthalmologist or optometrist
 - Remember, you may not be aware of changes occurring to your vision
 - DR can worsen in pregnancy so it is important to get a diabetic eye exam before getting pregnant and while pregnant



People with diabetes should get an eye exam once a year. This is a small investment of time to help keep your eyesight!



You may not be aware of changes occurring to your vision.

7 What if I don't have an ophthalmologist or optometrist?

- Your eyes can be checked for DR through a telemedicine screening program
- A technician takes a photograph of the back of your eye and sends it to an eye doctor to assess whether DR is present and/or whether additional follow-up is required

8 What happens if I have DR?

- Very effective treatments for DR are available and your eye care specialist will explain these to you

9 What can I do to reduce my risk of DR?

- For all patients with diabetes, follow the **ABCDEs**

- A** A1C – measures blood sugar control and should be 7% or less
- B** Blood pressure – optimal blood pressure control (less than 130/80 mmHg)
- C** Cholesterol – LDL-C 2.0 mmol/L or less
- D** Drugs to protect the heart (even if the baseline blood pressure or LDL-C is already at target)
- E** Exercise/Eating – Regular physical activity, healthy eating, maintaining a healthy body weight
- S** Smoking cessation⁴

10 Resources

- For more information about DR and diabetes, go to:
 - **Canadian Ophthalmological Society:** www.cos-sco.ca
 - **Canadian Association of Optometrists:** www.opto.ca/diabetes
 - **CNIB:** www.cnib.ca (check out the vision loss simulator to see what the world would look like with DR!)
 - **Angiogenesis Foundation:** www.eyecandoit.org
 - **Diabetes Canada:** www.diabetes.ca
 - **American Academy of Ophthalmology:** www.geteyesmart.org
 - **American Academy of Optometry:** www.aaopt.org

References

1. CNIB. Your Guide to Diabetic Retinopathy. <http://www.cnib.ca/en/your-eyes/eye-conditions/eye-connect/DR/Pages/default.aspx>. Accessed Jun 3, 2017.
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4. Canadian Diabetes Association: Clinical Practice Guidelines. Quick Reference Guide. <http://guidelines.diabetes.ca/vascularprotection/ABCDEs>. Accessed Jun 3, 2017.

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