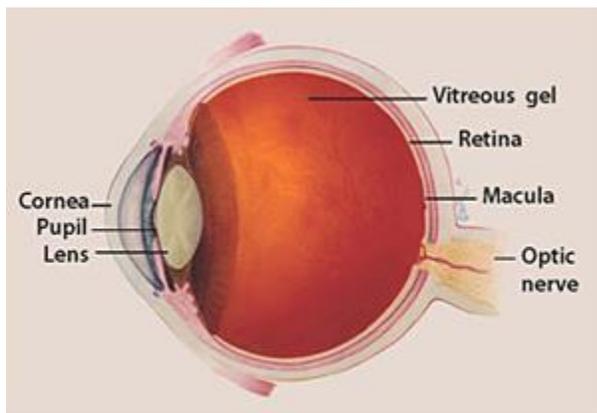


Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a group of diseases that damage the eye's optic nerve and can result in vision loss and blindness.

However, with early detection and treatment, you can often protect your eyes against serious vision loss.

What is the Optic Nerve?



The optic nerve is a bundle of more than 1 million nerve fibers. It connects the retina to the brain. The retina is the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. A healthy optic nerve is necessary for good vision.

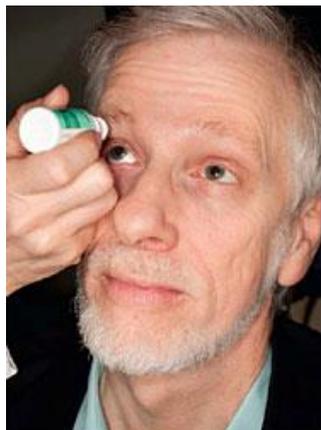
How does the optic nerve get damaged by glaucoma?

Eye pressure is a major risk factor for optic nerve damage. When the optic nerve is damaged from increased

pressure glaucoma and vision loss may result.

Another risk factor for optic nerve damage relates to blood pressure. Thus, it is important to also make sure that your blood pressure is at a proper level for your body by working with your medical doctor.

Can I develop glaucoma if I have increased eye pressure?



Not necessarily. Not every person with increased eye pressure will develop glaucoma. Some people can tolerate higher levels of eye pressure better than others. Also, a certain level of eye pressure may be high for one person but normal for another.

Can I develop glaucoma without an increase in my eye pressure?

Yes. Glaucoma can develop without increased eye pressure. This form of glaucoma is called low-tension or normal-tension glaucoma. It is a type of open-angle glaucoma.

A comprehensive dilated eye exam can reveal more risk factors, such as high eye pressure, thinness of the cornea, and abnormal optic nerve anatomy. In some people with certain combinations of these high-risk factors, medicines in the form of eyedrops reduce the risk of developing glaucoma by about half.

Glaucoma Symptoms

NORMAL VISION

VISION WITH GLAUCOMA



Without treatment, people with glaucoma will slowly lose their peripheral (side) vision. As glaucoma remains untreated, people may miss objects to the side and out of the corner of their eye. They seem to be looking through a tunnel. Over time, straight-ahead (central) vision may decrease until no vision remains.

Can glaucoma be cured?

No. There is no cure for glaucoma. Vision lost from the disease cannot be restored.

Glaucoma Treatments

Immediate treatment for early-stage glaucoma can delay progression of the disease. That's why early diagnosis is very important.

Glaucoma treatments include medicines, laser trabeculoplasty, conventional surgery, or a combination of any of these. While these treatments may save remaining vision, they do not improve sight already lost from glaucoma.

What You Can Do

If you are being treated for glaucoma, be sure to take your glaucoma medicine every day. See your eye care professional regularly.

Loss of Vision

If you have lost some sight from glaucoma, ask your eye care professional about low vision services and devices that may help you make the most of your remaining vision. Ask for a referral to a specialist in low vision. Many community organizations and agencies offer information about low vision counseling, training, and other special services for people with visual impairments.