



EYE APPEAL OPTOMETRY

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Glaucoma

Glaucoma is an eye disease in which the passage that allow fluid in the eye to drain become clogged or blocked. This results in the amount of fluid in the eye to build up, which leads to increased pressure inside the eye. This increased pressure damages the optic nerve which connects the eye to the brain. The optic nerve is the main carrier of visual information to the brain. Damage to it results in less information being sent to the brain and leads to a loss of vision.

The exact cause of glaucoma is not known for the current moment. It is one of the leading causes of blindness in the U.S. But, if detected at an early stage and treated promptly, glaucoma can usually be controlled with little or no further vision loss. That's why regular optometric examinations are so important. People of all ages can develop glaucoma, but it most frequently occurs in people:

- Who are over age 40
- Who have a family history of glaucoma
- Who are very nearsighted
- Who are diabetic
- Who are African American

Of the different types of glaucoma, primary open angle glaucoma often develops gradually and painlessly, without warning signs or symptoms. This type of glaucoma is more common among African Americans than Caucasians. It can cause damage and lead to blindness more quickly in African Americans, making regular eye examinations, including tests for glaucoma, particularly important. Another type, acute angle-closure glaucoma, may be accompanied by:

- Blurred vision
- A loss of side vision
- Appearance of colored rings around lights
- Pain or redness in the eyes

Regular eye examinations are an important means of detecting glaucoma in its early stages, and will include:

- Tonometry – a simple and painless measurement of the pressure in the eye.
- Ophthalmoscopy – an examination of the back of the eye to observe the health of the optic nerve.
- Visual field test – a check for the development of abnormal blind spots.

Glaucoma can usually be treated effectively by using eye drops or other medications. In some cases surgery may be necessary. Unfortunately, any loss of vision from glaucoma cannot usually be restored. But, early detection, prompt treatment and regular monitoring can enable you to continue living in much the same way as you have always lived.

Sincerely,
Henry T. Oishi, O.D.