

## Set your Sight on Healthy Vision: Preventing Diabetic Eye Disease

Diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness among adults, according to the American Diabetes Association. Yet 95% of severe vision loss from diabetic retinopathy---the most common diabetic eye disease---can be prevented! says the National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP).

How can we do that? Detect problems early, say experts. And get treatment when needed. Here's how:

**Don't lose your focus.** If you have diabetes, you are at risk for more than one type of eye disease:

- *Cataracts* cloud the lens of the eyes;
- *Diabetic retinopathy* damages blood vessels in the retina where vision is focused;
- *Glaucoma* damages the optic nerve and causes problems with peripheral (side) vision.

**Set your sights to schedule a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year.** This test allows your eye professional to get a true picture of the back of your eyes, where disease often begins.

**See the facts.** Since diabetic eye disease often has no warning signs, the best way to protect your vision is to take care of your diabetes.

**Look to these daily habits to keep your diabetes health on TRACK, says the NEHEP:**

**T**ake your medications as prescribed.  
**R**each and maintain a healthy weight.  
**A**dd physical activity to your daily routine. (Like *Dance Out Diabetes!*)  
**C**ontrol your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol.  
**K**ick the smoking habit.

**Envision a clear future.** Our eyes---like the rest of our body---maintain their best function when we eat a healthful diet, get daily exercise, and take medications as needed to control our blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol levels.

Find more information at <http://www.nei.nih.gov/diabetes/>

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