

DIABETES

Your eyes and diabetes

There are 3 things you can do to prevent eye problems:

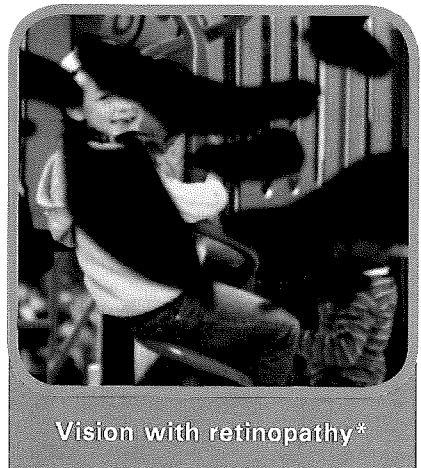
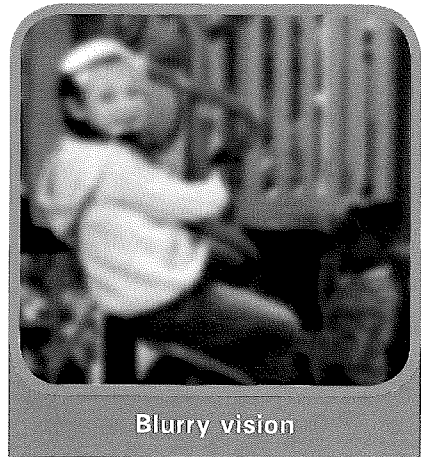
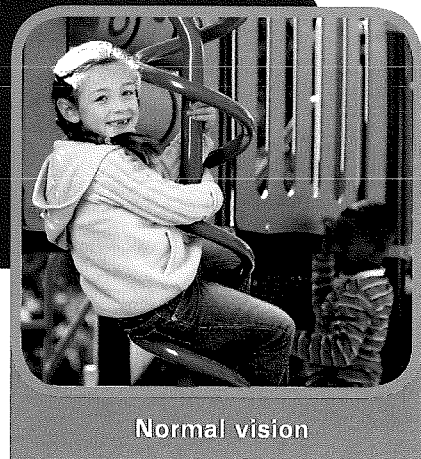
1. Keep your blood sugar under control
2. Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol under control
3. Have a dilated eye exam every year

What kinds of eye problems can diabetes cause?

High blood sugar can cause blurry vision, which may slowly improve when your blood sugar level is lowered. Also, over time, diabetes can damage the blood vessels in your eyes. It is the leading cause of blindness among adults. Diabetes may cause these common eye problems:

- cataracts (CAT-uh-racts)
 - can cause cloudy or foggy vision
- glaucoma (glau-CO-mah)
 - can cause cloudy or foggy vision
- diabetic retinopathy (reh-tin-AH-path-ee)
 - the most common cause of vision loss

The thought of eye problems caused by diabetes can be scary. But here's some good news. You can still protect your eyes and help keep them healthy.



*You may be able to see clearly and still have retinopathy.

Provided as an educational resource by Merck

How will I know if I have retinopathy?

You can have retinopathy and not know it because it may not change your vision until it gets worse. That's why it is so important to get a special eye exam, called a dilated (DIE-lay-ted) eye exam, at least once a year.

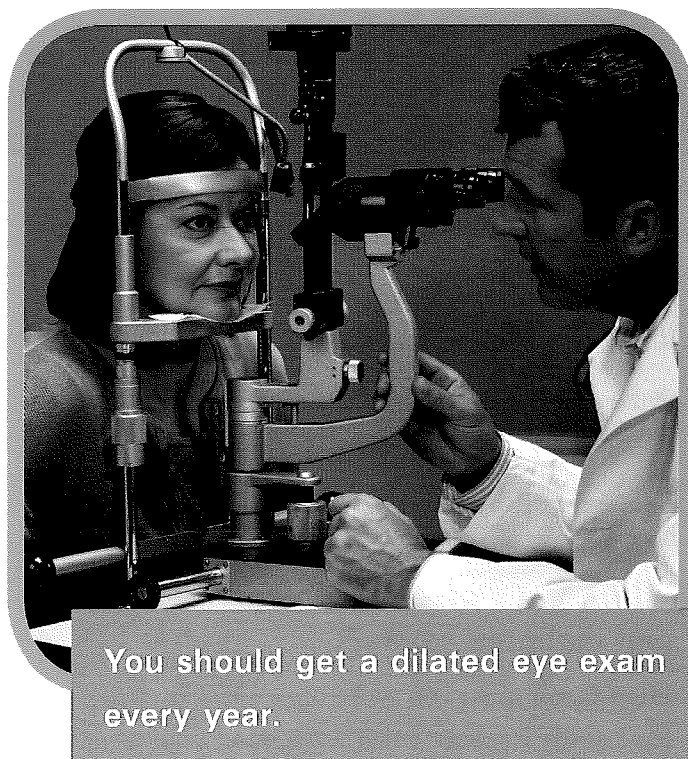
What's a dilated eye exam?

A dilated eye exam is not like a routine vision or eyeglass exam. During a dilated eye exam, your eye doctor will use special drops to open (dilate) your pupils. The pupil is the part of your eye that lets light enter. After dilating your pupils, the eye doctor will be able to see inside your eyes to look for problems like retinopathy. You should get a dilated eye exam every year.

What can I do if I have retinopathy?

Mild retinopathy may not need treatment. But you will need to work with your health care provider to keep your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol under control. It is also very important to keep seeing your eye doctor at least once a year. However, if you notice any changes in how well you see, visit your eye doctor right away.

If you need treatment for your eyes, your eye doctor will talk to you about treatments that are right for you.



Talk to your health care provider

Together with your health care provider and eye doctor, you can work out a plan to keep your eyes healthy. Be sure to talk about any questions or concerns you may have. Get a dilated eye exam from an eye doctor at least once a year, and take those results with you to your next appointment with your primary health care provider.