

## Glaucoma

- What is glaucoma?** Glaucoma is a group of eye disorders that cause progressive damage to the optic nerve. The optic nerve is important because it transmits visual signals from inside the eye to the brain. Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the United States and damage to the nerve is irreversible causing permanent vision loss.
- What Causes glaucoma?** There are multiple causes and types of Glaucoma. The most common type of glaucoma is caused by an increase of pressure inside the eye. This increase in pressure over time can damage the nerve and the damage slowly equates to vision loss. High eye pressure can also lead to decreased blood flow to the optic nerve which can also damage the optic nerve.
- What are the signs and symptoms of glaucoma?** There are no symptoms in the initial or early stages of Glaucoma. Once Glaucoma has progressed, the patient will develop decreased peripheral or "side" vision. Central vision, used to focus on an object (e.g. when you are reading), is usually not affected until later on in the disease. With no symptoms, it is critical to get annual exams where the doctor will check the eye pressure and optic nerve for any abnormalities.
- Why am I a glaucoma suspect?** There are many reasons one may be a "Glaucoma Suspect". This does not mean you definitely have glaucoma, but it does mean there is one or more risk factors present, requiring extra testing (Glaucoma Workup). Below are the most common risk factors:
  - High Eye Pressure
  - African/Asian Descent
  - Family History Of Glaucoma
  - Severe Nearsighted Prescription
  - Diabetes
  - "Thinned Out" or "Excavated" Nerve Appearance
- What additional testing is done in a glaucoma workup?** Since Glaucoma is a slowly advancing chronic (life-long) condition, some of the following tests will be performed, and possibly repeated, over several years:
  - Eye Pressures (IOP)
  - Corneal Thickness Measurement
  - Optic Nerve Photography
  - Peripheral/Side Vision Testing (Visual Field Testing)
  - Angle Drainage Inspection
  - Healthy Nerve Tissue (Nerve Fiber Layer) Assessment
- What is the treatment for glaucoma?** Treatment aims to lower the pressure of the eye and prevent loss of vision, or further deterioration in vision. Drops are generally used first to lower the eye pressure, but there are surgical options as well. Since treatment cannot restore any eyesight that has already been lost as a result of Glaucoma, early diagnosis and maintenance is very important. Your doctor may recommend regular appointments and screenings, it is beneficial to attend each one.

NORMAL VISION



ADVANCED GLAUCOMA



EARLY GLAUCOMA



EXTREME GLAUCOMA



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### Optic nerve head cupping progression



0.3 c/d

0.6 c/d

0.95 c/d

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