



Normal fundus



Fundus damaged by diabetes

Diabetes and your retina

If you have diabetes, your body is unable to use glucose effectively because it is not making enough insulin or the insulin is not working properly. Insulin moves glucose from the blood into the body's cells where it can be used for energy. Regular exercise, a healthy diet and avoidance of smoking will lower your risk of developing diabetes.

Diabetes can cause damage to the retina and loss of vision. The retina is the surface at the back of the eye that receives light from everything we see. A healthy retina is essential for good vision. Having high blood glucose and high blood pressure for a long time can damage the tiny blood vessels in the eye.

As problems with the retina get worse, you may get blurry or double vision, or see rings, flashing lights, black spots, floating

spots or almost total darkness. Call your optometrist right away if you are having any vision problems or if you have had a sudden change in your vision.

If you have diabetes, your optometrist will communicate with your GP and other health-care professionals involved in your diabetes care, and you may need to have eye examinations more frequently than every two years.

You can help prevent diabetes eye problems by keeping your blood glucose and blood pressure as close to normal as you can.

You should have an optometrist examine your eyes every two years even if your vision seems all right. Don't wait for symptoms to appear. Finding eye problems early and getting prompt treatment will help prevent more serious problems later.