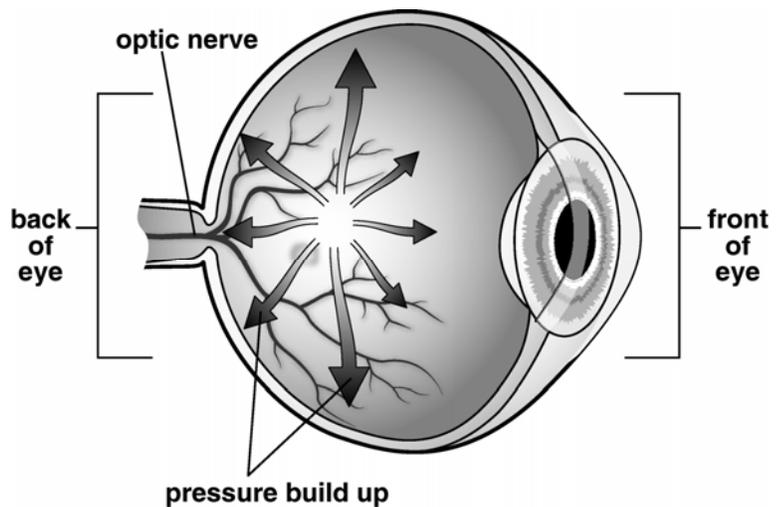


# Glaucoma

Glaucoma is an eye disease that can cause vision loss or blindness. With glaucoma, fluid builds up in the eye, which puts pressure on the back of the eye. This pressure injures the optic nerve and causes vision loss. Side vision is often affected first, followed by front vision.



## Types of Glaucoma

There are two main types of glaucoma:

- **Open-angle glaucoma** often has no signs until it reaches an advanced stage. The pressure slowly damages the optic nerve over time. This affects both eyes but you may have signs in one eye first.
- **Angle-closure glaucoma** has a very fast rise in pressure and sudden signs. Permanent vision loss can occur within one day so it is very important to seek medical care right away.

## Risk Factors

You are at risk for developing glaucoma if you:

- Have a family member with glaucoma
- Have diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease or hypothyroidism
- Are nearsighted
- Have had an injury to the eye, certain eye surgeries or chronic eye inflammation
- Have been taking steroids for long periods of time
- Are over age 60
- Are African-American or Mexican-American
- Are of Asian-American descent – this puts you at increased risk for angle-closure glaucoma

## **Signs**

Glaucoma may have no signs until there is vision loss. Other signs you may have:

- Blurred vision
- Halos around lights
- Loss of peripheral or side vision
- Tunnel vision
- Red eyes
- Severe eye pain
- Nausea and vomiting

## **Treatment**

Your eye doctor may do tests to check your:

- Eye pressure
- Optic nerve
- Vision

Glaucoma cannot be cured and damage cannot be reversed. But with treatment, eye pressure can be decreased and further vision loss can be prevented. Eye drops are the most common early treatment for glaucoma. Other treatments may include oral medicines, laser treatment or surgery. When you have glaucoma, it must be treated for the rest of your life.

## **Your Care**

There is no proven way to prevent glaucoma. If increased eye pressure is detected and treated early, it can decrease loss of vision and prevent blindness.

- Have your eyes checked and tested for glaucoma at least every five years after age 40. If your pressure readings begin to rise, you will need to have eye exams more often.

- To prevent increased pressure in your eyes:
  - ▶ Find ways to cope with stress.
  - ▶ Exercise regularly.
  - ▶ Limit caffeine.
  - ▶ Eat a healthy diet of fruits and vegetables.
  - ▶ Wear eye protection during work or with sports to prevent injury.
- Control your diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol and heart disease.
- Do not use herbal remedies that are advertised for glaucoma treatment. These are not proven effective and may delay your getting proper treatment.

**Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**