DIABETES AND YOUR EYES

WHAT IS DIABETIC RETINOPATHY?

- Sight threatening condition that happens in people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes.
- Too much sugar in the blood damages small blood vessels in the back of the eyes (the retina)
 - When the blood vessels get damaged they leak blood and fluid into the retina. The retina swells and makes vision blurry (pictured below)

HOW DOES SOMEONE KNOW IF THEY HAVE IT?

 Most people will not notice any symptoms in the early stages, even if they have bleeding in their eyes



HOW DOES IT CAUSE VISION LOSS?

- In earlier stages, fluid can leak into the macula and cause it to swell (macular edema). The macula helps us see color and fine detail
- In later stages, the retina becomes starved of oxygen, which causes new small blood vessels to grow
 - These new vessels leak blood very easily and cloud vision
 - Detachment of the retina and glaucoma can happen

WAYS TO PREVENT RETINOPATHY

- In the later stages, symptoms include blurry vision, spots in vision, blind spots, and distorted vision
- The only way to diagnose diabetic retinopathy is through a comprehensive eye exam

IMPORTANCE OF YEARLY EXAMS

- The longer someone has had diabetes, the more likely they are to develop retinopathy, even if they are taking all preventative measures and don't have any symptoms
- It is important to detect retinopathy early! It is much easier to treat in the early stages than the later stages.
 - It will also help your doctor know if your medication needs to be adjusted

- Controlling blood sugar levels
- Taking your medication as prescribed
- Good diet
- Regular exercise
- Keeping blood pressure less than 140/80
- Lowering lipid levels and cholesterol
- Managing your weight
- Avoiding alcohol and smoking



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https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/eye-and-vision-conditions/diabetic-retinopathy?sso=y, https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/diabetes-vision-

loss.html#:~:text=Eye%20diseases%20that%20can%20affect,way%20toward%20protecting%20your%20eyesight., https://www.endocrineweb.com/conditions/diabetes/diabetic-retinopathy