

Diabetic Eye Disease

Approximately 4% of people have diabetes, often undiagnosed. Diabetes can damage many parts of the body, including the eyes, causing vision problems, glaucoma, cataract and diabetic retinopathy.

Diabetic Retinopathy

When diabetes causes long-term damage to the retinal blood vessels, an inflammation of the retina occurs called Diabetic Retinopathy. This is a very serious sight-threatening condition resulting in swelling, haemorrhages and exudates (discharge) on the retina.

Changes in blood sugar levels can cause swelling in the eye which then leads to blurred and fluctuating vision. In addition, glaucoma and cataract are more common in diabetics and it may also lead to retinal detachment.

Risk Factors

The largest risk factor for diabetic retinopathy is the length of duration of the disease. The type of diabetes also has an effect with 90% of insulin-dependent (Type 1) diabetics having retinopathy after 20 years, compared to 70% of the non-insulin-dependent (Type 2) patients. Diabetic control is another major risk factor and there are also links to high blood pressure, kidney disease and smoking.

Symptoms

Without realising that the condition is present, 30% of all diabetics already have retinal damage. Retinopathy can also be quite advanced in one eye before the patient notices any symptoms.

Treatment

Possible treatment depends upon the severity of the retinopathy. Laser surgery to the retina is a possibility, if detected early enough. The best treatment is early detection.

More information

For more information on diabetic eye disease, please contact Eyecare Plus Clifton Beach on (07) 4059 1444 or [click here to request an appointment online](#).