

Diabetic Retinopathy Risk Quiz



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Diabetes affects about 29 million Americans and 8.1 million of those people don't know they have the disease. The longer you have diabetes, the greater your risk of developing diabetic retinopathy. That's why it's essential you know as much as you can about your eyesight. What is the likelihood that you will lose your sight from diabetes? Take this quiz and find out. Turn to the back for answers to this quiz.

Circle the best answer

1. It's been more than a year since you've had a comprehensive eye exam, which includes dilating the pupils and a careful evaluation of the back of your eyes. yes no
2. You suffer from blurry vision from time to time. yes no
3. You are in your 20s, take insulin and have had diabetes for more than five years. yes no
4. You have recently been diagnosed with noninsulin-dependent diabetes. yes no
5. You have diabetes and your blood sugar levels often fluctuate out of control. yes no
6. You have diabetes and suffer from high blood pressure. yes no
7. You are of Hispanic, African-American, Asian American, Pacific Islander or of Native American descent. yes no
8. Family members who have diabetes now suffer from diabetic retinopathy, cataracts or glaucoma. yes no
9. You're overweight (according to your doctor's height/weight chart) and you don't exercise. yes no
10. You're a pregnant woman with diabetes. yes no



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Diabetic Retinopathy Risk Quiz—Answers

- 1-2. Blurry vision may be a sign that you are suffering from diabetes. It's important that you see your eye doctor as soon as possible for a comprehensive eye exam that includes dilating the pupils. This allows the eye doctor to check your eye's blood vessels for unusual changes. If your eye doctor notices changes caused by diabetic retinopathy or glaucoma, he/she can suggest treatments to save your sight.
- 3-4. The longer you have diabetes, the greater the chances you will develop diabetic eye disease. That's why Prevent Blindness recommends that people with insulin-dependent diabetes should be examined annually for diabetic retinopathy starting five years after the onset of diabetes (but generally not before puberty.) People with noninsulin-dependent diabetes should see their eye doctor soon after being diagnosed. You may have diabetes a long time without even knowing it.
- 5-6. High blood pressure and poor control of blood sugar levels can increase your risk of blindness. Both are linked to the development and progression of diabetic retinopathy or cataracts. Research is being done to find out if controlling blood sugar levels and blood pressure will prevent or stop the progression of diabetic eye disease. It's always vital that you keep your diabetes under control and follow your doctor's advice in treating your high blood pressure.
- 7-8. Race and family history seem to have a lot to do with who will get diabetes. People who are of Hispanic, African-American, Asian American, Pacific Islander and Native American descent are more likely to develop diabetes, especially if they are overweight. Talk to family members and find out if anyone in your family has diabetes and suffers from diabetic eye disease. At your next doctor's appointment, share your family's medical history.
- 9-10. Some studies have shown that people who exercise may prevent noninsulin-dependent diabetes. It's important that you talk to your doctor first if you plan to start an exercise program. Pregnant women with diabetes should see their eye doctor during pregnancy. Scientists are not certain why pregnancy seems to increase a woman's risk of developing and even accelerating diabetic retinopathy.