



# Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that damages the optic nerve and causes vision loss.



Vision with Glaucoma

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

### Chronic (Open-Angle)

This type takes place gradually. Loss of side (peripheral) vision and blurred vision are the first signs. Later, symptoms include:

- Vision loss in side and central vision, usually in both eyes.
- Blind spots. Seeing halos around lights.
- Poor night vision.
- Blindness, if not treated early.

### Acute (Angle-Closure)

This type is a medical emergency! These symptoms occur suddenly:

- Severe eye pain and nausea
- Blurred vision. Seeing halos around lights.
- Redness in the eye. Swollen upper eyelid.
- Severe headache that throbs



## CAUSES

Glaucoma occurs when the pressure of the liquid in the eye gets too high and causes damage to the optic nerve. Increased eye pressure without damage is not glaucoma, but increases the risk for it. Antihistamines and long-term corticosteroid use can trigger or worsen glaucoma.

## Risk Factors

- Being over age 60
- Being African American over age 40
- Having a family history of glaucoma
- Having diabetes
- Being nearsighted

## TREATMENT

Glaucoma may not be preventable, but the blindness that could result from it is. All adults over age 40 should be screened for glaucoma. If pressure inside the eyeball is high, an eye doctor will prescribe treatment. This includes:

- Prescribed eye drops or pills lower eye pressure, cause the eye to make less fluid, or help drain fluid from the eye. Take medicines on a regular basis. Let your eye doctor know of side effects.
- Laser beam surgery
- Surgery that drains fluid from the eye.

Treatments help with current vision. They do not improve sight already lost from glaucoma.



## TRIAGE QUESTIONS



Do you have signs and symptoms of acute glaucoma?

**NO**

**YES** ➔ **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**



Do you have any signs and symptoms of chronic glaucoma?

**NO**

**YES** ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



**USE SELF-CARE**



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The Glaucoma Foundation  
[glaucomafoundation.org](http://glaucomafoundation.org)

## SELF-CARE / PREVENTION

- Don't smoke. If you smoke, keep trying to quit.
- Do not take any medicine, including over-the-counter ones, without first checking with your doctor or pharmacist. Most cold medications and sleeping pills, for example, can cause the pupil in the eye to dilate. This can lead to increased eye pressure.
- If prescribed eye drops for glaucoma, use them as directed.
- Ask your eye doctor about low vision services and devices.
- Try not to get upset and fatigued. These can increase pressure in the eye.
- Low vision aids can help you see things better.