

GLAUCOMA

The Silent Blinder

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that can cause vision loss and blindness by damaging a nerve in the back of your eye called the optic nerve.

The optic nerve sends visual information from your eye to your brain and is vital for good vision. Damage to the optic nerve is often related to high pressure in your eye. But glaucoma can happen even with normal eye pressure.



Am I at risk of developing glaucoma?

Glaucoma can occur at any age but is more common in older adults. It is one of the leading causes of blindness for people over the age of 40.

Other major risk factors include:

- People of African-American (occurs more frequently and at an earlier age), Irish, Russian, Japanese, Hispanic, Inuit, or Scandinavian descent.
- A family history of glaucoma.
- Myopia or near-sightedness.
- Thin corneas.
- Taking certain steroid medications such as prednisone.
- High blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, or sickle cell anaemia.
- Previous eye trauma.

Symptoms of glaucoma:

Half of affected people don't know they have glaucoma. For most people, there are usually few or no symptoms of glaucoma. The first sign of glaucoma is often the loss of peripheral or side vision, which can go unnoticed until late in the disease. This is why glaucoma is often called the "silent blinder".

The symptoms can start so slowly that you may not notice them unless regular testing is done.

Occasionally, intraocular pressure can rise to severe levels. In these cases, sudden eye pain, headache, blurred vision, or the appearance of halos or "rainbow colours" around lights may occur. If you have any of the following symptoms, seek immediate medical care:

- Seeing halos around lights
- Vision loss
- Redness in the eye
- Eye that looks hazy (particularly in infants)
- Nausea or vomiting
- Pain in the eye
- Narrowing of vision (tunnel vision)



There are two main types of glaucoma:

1 Open-angle glaucoma

Also called wide-angle glaucoma, this is the most common type of glaucoma. The structures of the eye appear normal, but fluid in the eye does not flow properly through the drain of the eye, called the trabecular meshwork.

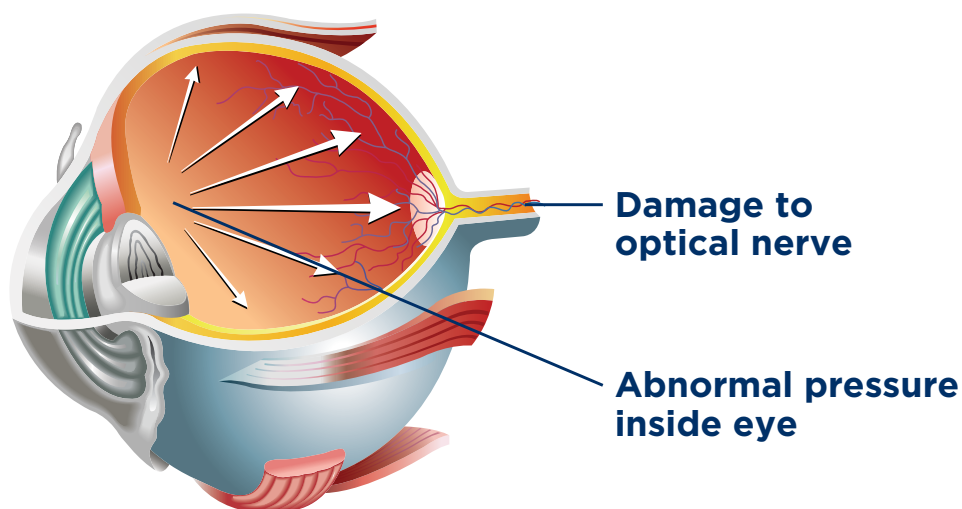
2 Angle-closure glaucoma

Also called acute or chronic angle closure or narrow-angle glaucoma, this type of glaucoma is less common in the West than in Asia. Poor drainage is caused because the angle between the iris and the cornea is too narrow and is physically blocked by the iris. This condition leads to a sudden buildup of pressure in the eye.

Other types of glaucoma

Less commonly, there are also low-tension or normal-tension glaucoma, congenital glaucoma (born with it), uveitic (inflammatory) glaucoma and eovascular glaucoma

Glaucoma



Diagnosis

Eye doctors and optometrists can check for glaucoma as part of a comprehensive dilated eye exam. The exam is simple and painless — your doctor will give you some eye drops to dilate (widen) your pupil and then check your eyes for glaucoma and other eye problems. The exam includes a visual field test to check your side vision.

Other types of glaucoma

The damage caused by glaucoma can't be reversed. But treatment and regular checkups can help slow or prevent vision loss, especially if you catch the disease in its early stages. Glaucoma is treated by lowering intraocular pressure. Treatment options include prescription eye drops, oral medicines, laser treatment, surgery or a combination of approaches.

These treatments help slowing the progression of or even halting further vision loss. Additional measures to slow the disease's progression include:

- 1 Regular exercise
- 2 Consistently taking prescribed medication
- 3 Managing medical conditions that increase the risk of glaucoma
- 4 Limiting or reducing caffeine intake which may increase the pressure in the eye
- 5 Regular eye examinations, preferably twice a year if older than age of 40

For more information consult with a healthcare provider at your nearest Platinum Health medical facility.



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Sources: HYPERLINK

"<http://www.mayoclinic.org>", HYPERLINK "<http://www.webmd.com>"
<https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/glaucoma>
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/glaucoma>