January is Glaucoma Awareness Month

Presented By

ecr purpose

Signs & Symptoms of Childhood Glaucoma

The National Eye Institute defines glaucoma as a group of eye diseases that can cause vision loss and blindness by damaging a nerve in the back of the eye called the optic nerve.

This nerve sends information from the eyes to the brain. Usually, glaucoma affects side vision (peripheral vision) first. Late in the disease, glaucoma may cause “tunnel vision.” In this condition, a person can only see straight ahead.

The symptoms for childhood glaucoma are different than for adults. The Glaucoma Research Foundation states that parents and caregivers should look for signs of congenital glaucoma that include:

- excessive tearing
- enlarged eyes - one or both
- cloudy corneas and a dull iris
- sensitivity to light in one or both eyes
- nearsightedness in one or both eyes

Source: preventblindness.org

GLAUCOMA & BLINDNESS

Glaucoma is the second most common cause for irreversible blindness worldwide.

However, with early diagnosis and modern treatment, blindness is very uncommon.

This is one of the many reasons why annual eye exams are important!

Glaucoma can be caught early when treatment is most effective at preventing vision loss.

GLAUCOMA & BLINDNESS

In general, from the best data in developed countries of the world, the risk of reaching that level of visual loss with a diagnosis of glaucoma is about 5%. In many of those people, the visual loss is compounded by the added presence of other eye conditions such as macular degeneration. Each person's actual risk will depend on how far advanced the glaucoma is when first diagnosed. The more advanced the glaucoma, the greater the risk.

Therefore, it is critical to get regular eye examinations before symptoms appear so that, if glaucoma does develop, it is caught early when treatment is most effective at preventing vision loss. Of course, regular follow up and adherence to prescribed treatment are also critical in slowing or stopping progression.

New and improved treatments should make severe vision loss even less likely. Although some eyes seem to be resistant to all modalities of treatment, for the vast majority of patients with glaucoma, adherence to treatment and appropriate monitoring will keep them from becoming blind by any definition.

Source: glaucoma.org

How is Glaucoma Diagnosed?

Early detection, through regular and complete eye exams, is the key to protecting your vision from damage caused by glaucoma.

A complete eye exam includes five common tests to detect glaucoma:

- Tonometry – to test inner eye pressure
- Ophthalmoscopy (dilated eye exam) – to examine the shape and color of the optic nerve
- Perimetry (visual field test) – to test the complete field of vision
- Gonioscopy – to examine the angle in the eye where the iris meets the cornea
- Pachymetry – to test the thickness of the cornea

It is important to have your eyes examined regularly. You should get a baseline eye screening at age 40. Early signs of eye disease and changes in vision may start to occur at this age. Your eye doctor will tell you how often to have follow-up exams based on the results of this screening.

If you have high risk factors for glaucoma, diabetes, high blood pressure, or a family history of glaucoma, you should see an eye doctor now to determine how often to have eye exams.

Source: glaucoma.org

Open-Angle Glaucoma

There are several types of glaucoma. The two main types are open-angle and angle-closure. These are marked by an increase of intraocular pressure (IOP), or pressure inside the eye.

Open-angle glaucoma is also called primary or chronic glaucoma. It is the most common type of glaucoma, affecting about 3 million Americans.

“Open-angle” means that the angle where the iris meets the cornea is as wide and open as it should be.

Source: glaucoma.org

Open-Angle Glaucoma

- Is the most common form of glaucoma, accounting for at least 90% of all glaucoma cases
- Is caused by the slow clogging of the drainage canals, resulting in increased eye pressure
- Has a wide and open angle between the iris and cornea
- Develops slowly and is a lifelong condition
- Has symptoms and damage that are not noticed

Source: glaucoma.org

Angle-Closure Glaucoma

Angle-closure glaucoma is a less common form of glaucoma. It is also called acute glaucoma or narrow-angle glaucoma.

Unlike open-angle glaucoma, angle-closure glaucoma is a result of the angle between the iris and cornea closing and is caused by blocked drainage canals, resulting in a sudden rise in intraocular pressure.

Angle-closure glaucoma can develop very quickly and demands immediate medical attention. It has symptoms and damage that are usually very noticeable.

About 1 in 1,000 people develop acute glaucoma in their lifetime. It is more likely to occur in people over the age of 40 years, and most often happens at around age 60-70 years. It is more common in far-sighted people and in women.

GLAUCOMA

WHEN IS IT AN EMERGENCY?

If you are experiencing the symptoms of Acute Angle-Closure Glaucoma including:

- severe eye pain
- nausea and/or vomiting
- redness in the eye
- seeing halos or colored rings around lights
- blurred vision

This is an emergency condition in which severe vision loss can occur quickly; go to the emergency room or see your eye doctor immediately.

If you have high risk factors for glaucoma, diabetes, high blood pressure, or a family history of glaucoma, you should see an eye doctor now to determine how often to have eye exams.

Sources: mayoclinic.org & aoa.org

What Foods to Eat with Glaucoma

- Leafy Greens
- Bananas
- Avocados
- Seeds
- Black Beans
- Nuts
- Fish
- Chocolate
- Hot Tea

Bananas, avocados, pumpkin seeds, black beans - these are great sources to help you meet the recommended daily allowance of 300-400mg magnesium. Though more research is needed, preliminary studies suggest that dietary magnesium may benefit people with glaucoma by improving blood flow to the eye.

See www.glaucoma.org//news/blog/glaucoma-and-nutrition-why-what-you-eat-matters.php for more information.

Foods and Drinks to Avoid if You Have Glaucoma

- Caffeine
- Salt
- Saturated Fats
- Trans Fats
- Simple Carbs
- Excessive Alcohol

Foods and Drinks to Avoid if You Have Glaucoma

Foods that contribute to metabolic syndrome, obesity, blood pressure abnormalities, and diabetes are risk factors for primary open-angle glaucoma. Therefore, a diet that helps maintain normal blood pressure and blood glucose concentrations helps reduce substantial risk for glaucoma.

Studies have also noted that an association may exist between obesity and elevated intraocular pressure (IOP) and ocular hypertension. There's no evidence yet indicating that losing excess weight reduces the risk for glaucoma, although significant decreases in IOP have been reported in humans through weight loss.

Caloric intake is another factor for glaucoma patients. One study found that healthy caloric restriction can positively affect the eyes, making it more likely to trigger what the researchers refer to as "anti-aging mechanisms," helping them limit ocular dysfunction. Diets high in carbohydrates have also been correlated with a greater risk of glaucoma, while a lower intake of carbohydrates correlates with lesser risk.

Understanding how diet can impact the risk of glaucoma and following healthy dietary guidelines can play an essential role in the lives of people living with glaucoma.

Source: glaucoma.org