

In between my regular eye checks, what changes to my vision should make me see my doctor?



Have regular diabetes eye checks at least every two years



Maintain healthy blood glucose levels



Maintain a healthy blood pressure



Quit smoking



Maintain healthy cholesterol



Report any rapid changes in your sight to your doctor immediately

What changes to my vision should make me see my doctor?

- ! My vision becomes blurry
- ! I have trouble reading
- ! I start to see double
- ! One or both of my eyes hurt
- ! I feel pressure in my eye(s)
- ! I see spots or 'floaters'
- ! I can't see things out the side of my eyes, as I used to

If I have diabetes, how do I get my eyes checked?

Ask your doctor or diabetes health professional for information on how to get a diabetes eye check. Your doctor can refer you to an optometrist or ophthalmologist. They can also refer you to the free Diabetes Retinal Screening Programme, available nationwide.

What is a diabetes eye check?

It is a simple procedure that takes approximately 30 minutes.

A diabetes eye check involves a specially trained health professional looking at, or photographing the back of your eyes (retina).

You may be given eye drops to help the specialist see the back of your eyes. These can leave your eyes sensitive to light, so take your sunglasses, be prepared to wait for your vision to return to normal or ask someone to accompany you if you have to drive.

If any issues are detected, your eye health professional will advise you of treatment options.

To order *Your eye health and diabetes* or any of the Diabetes New Zealand information booklets, contact us:

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Your eye health and diabetes



Your eye health and diabetes



Diabetes is the leading cause of preventable blindness in Aotearoa. Everyone living with diabetes is at risk of losing their vision.

Looking after your eyes is very important when you have diabetes. People with diabetes are more likely to develop eye problems.

The good news is, with early diagnosis and treatment, you can reduce or even prevent your chance of diabetes eye damage. You can also stop it from getting worse if you already have it.

The most important thing you can do to look after your eyes is have regular diabetes eye checks.

Type 1	
Newly diagnosed?	Eye checks typically start 5 years after diagnosis. Ask your doctor to refer you for a full diabetes eye check with your local Diabetes Retinal Screening Programme.
Living with diabetes?	After your first diabetes eye check, visit your doctor to get re-referred for follow-up checks at least every two years.
Already have diabetes eye damage?	Have checks and treatment as directed by an eye specialist.
Type 2	
Newly diagnosed?	Ask your doctor to refer you for a full diabetes eye check when you are first diagnosed. This check should happen with your local Diabetes Retinal Screening Programme.
Living with diabetes?	After your first diabetes eye check, visit your doctor to get re-referred for follow-up checks at least every two years.
Already have diabetes eye damage?	Have checks and treatment as directed by an eye specialist.

How can diabetes affect my eyes?

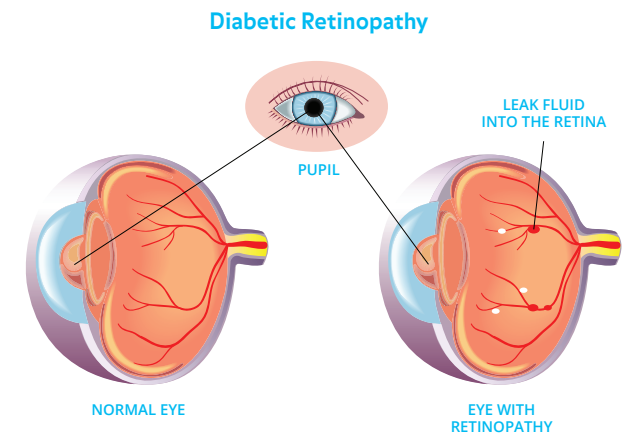
Diabetes can cause both short-term and long-term eye problems.

Short-term

High blood glucose levels can cause your vision to blur temporarily due to a change in the shape of the lens of your eye. You can experience blurred vision at different times of your diabetes journey including before you're diagnosed, when starting a new treatment, or when your blood glucose levels change quickly between high and low. Talk to your doctor if you notice this happening.

Long-term

Diabetes can lead to long-term eye problems including diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and cataracts. Factors that increase your risk of these more serious eye problems include consistently high blood glucose levels, high blood pressure or high cholesterol. These eye problems can lead to reduced vision or blindness if left untreated.



Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy is a common complication of diabetes that damages tiny blood vessels in the back of the eye (retina). This causes the blood vessels to weaken and leak fluid or blood. 1 in 3 people with diabetes will develop diabetic retinopathy in their lifetime.

There may be no symptoms in the early stages of diabetic retinopathy, making it important to have regular eye checks so it can be detected and treated early. As retinopathy gets worse, symptoms can include blurred or distorted vision, seeing floating spots or flashes, sensitivity to light and poor night vision. Fortunately, if found early, diabetic retinopathy can be treated.

To find out more about long-term eye problems go to:

www.diabetes.org.nz/complication-eyes