

# Key community eye health messages

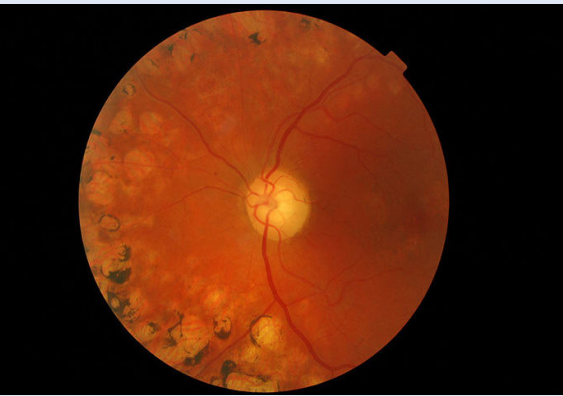
## Diabetic retinopathy and its risk factors



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- Diabetes increases the risk of various eye diseases, including diabetic retinopathy (DR), which affects the blood vessels within the retina.
- DR can affect both eyes and if left untreated, may cause vision loss.
- Risk factors for developing DR include poorly controlled blood sugar levels, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol levels.

## Progression of diabetic retinopathy



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- Over time, uncontrolled blood sugar can lead to abnormal growth or blockage of retinal blood vessels.
- Abnormal vessel growth due to reduced oxygen flow can result in **retinal scarring and detachment**.
- Fluid accumulation and swelling in the macula can lead to **blurred vision**.
- In later stages, irreversible damage causes **blindness**.

## Screening and intervention in diabetic retinopathy



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- DR often has no early symptoms, so many people with diabetes may not notice changes in their vision.
- The disease can progress unnoticed until it reaches advanced stages, potentially causing irreversible damage and blindness.
- Yearly retinal examinations are crucial to detect the early signs of DR, allowing for timely intervention.
- Treatment usually maintains vision but does not restore vision that has already been lost.
- People at risk of vision loss due to DR can receive treatments such as laser therapy, anti-VEGF treatment, or vitreoretinal surgery. The choice of treatment depends on the stage of the disease and other individual factors.