

Diabetic Retinopathy

Information for patients and families

People with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are at a higher risk of developing vision problems. An estimated half-million Canadians have diabetic retinopathy, in which high blood sugar levels cause blood vessels in the retina (a nerve layer that lines the back of the eyes and senses light) to swell and leak. New blood vessels may also grow, causing more damage. Without treatment, diabetic retinopathy can lead to blindness, usually in both eyes.

RISK INCREASES WITH

Smoking	High blood pressure
Uncontrolled high blood sugar	Ethnicity (Aboriginal, South Asian, etc...)

HAVING REGULAR EYE CHECK-UPS

Early detection and treatment of major eye conditions is essential to help prevent significant vision loss or blindness. Routine eye checks, at least once a year, or sooner if recommended by your eye specialist. Be sure to see your eye care professional regularly or as soon as possible if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Dark spots in your visual field
- Blurred, distorted or double vision
- Blurred central vision or growing central blind spot

LIVING WITH A MAJOR EYE CONDITION

- Living with vision loss can be difficult, and it's not uncommon to feel depressed, overwhelmed or frustrated after being diagnosed with an eye condition. But you don't have to face these challenges alone. CNIB can help you see beyond vision loss, teaching you practical techniques to help you adapt to vision loss in your everyday life, regain your independence and achieve your goals.