



Eye Health and Diabetes

How Diabetes can Affect Eye Health

- People with diabetes are more likely to develop certain eye diseases such as diabetic retinopathy and cataracts. The longer someone has diabetes, the more likely he or she will develop eye diseases.
- Diabetic retinopathy is caused by changes in the blood vessels in the eye. In some people, blood vessels in the retina may swell and leak fluid. In others, abnormal new blood vessels grow on the surface of the retina.
- In some patients a special type of laser surgery can be used to treat diabetic retinopathy. In laser surgery, an intense beam of light is used to shrink the abnormal blood vessels or seal leaking blood vessels. In some patients with diabetic retinopathy, laser surgery can reduce the risk of serious vision loss. Other treatments are also available for diabetic retinopathy. Treatment type depends on the nature of the severity of the disease.

Reducing the Risk of Vision Loss

- As with all eye disease, **prevention is key** since treatment does not always reverse damage or vision loss from diabetic retinopathy. Studies show that careful management of blood sugar levels slows the onset and progression of diabetic retinopathy.
- The risk of blindness from diabetic eye disease can be reduced with early detection and timely treatment.

Types of Exams and OHIP Coverage

- **An annual dilated fundus retinal eye exam is the minimum recommended exam for people with diabetes.** The costs of this dilated eye exam are covered by OHIP every 12 months (as well as any required follow up exams needed) for individuals of all ages with diabetes. In this exam your eye doctor should use special eye drops to dilate the pupil. These drops allow the eye care professional to examine the blood vessels within the eye.
- Many eye care professionals prefer photography/imaging over dilated fundus exams as a way of more accurately documenting your eye health. However, neither fundus photography nor digital retinal imaging is covered by OHIP and you will be required to pay for these services. If cost is a barrier for you, discuss your options with your eye care professional.

Annual Retinal Eye Exams are Recommended

- **People with diabetes should have regular specialized eye examinations through dilated pupils every 12 months.** In some cases your eye care professional may even recommend more frequent follow-ups. **A vision test is not enough.**
- Most optometrists take new patients. Call directly, tell them you have diabetes and make an appointment. Waiting lists are often long so be sure to make eye appointments well in advance.
- Communication between your doctor and optometrists is important. Ask your optometrist to send back all exam results to your doctor even when your eyes haven't changed.
- Don't feel afraid or too rushed to ask questions. Health care providers are here to help you.

Optometrists in Collingwood/Wasaga Beach/Stayner

Collingwood	Wasaga Beach	Stayner
Dr. Robert Hammond, Dr. Eric Raymond & Dr. Jayne Cation 460 Hume Street Ph: 705-445-2970	Georgian Bay Optometry Clinic Dr. Anna Dionisio, Dr. John Peacock & Dr. Hari Amarnath 1026 Mosley Street Ph: 705-990-5497	Stayner Optometry Clinic Dr. Kimberly Krmpotic, Dr. David Hazlett, Dr. John Hamilton & Dr. Paul McLean 7458 Hwy 26, Unit 12 Ph: 705-428-0184
Dr. William Tucker 195 Saint Marie Street Ph: 705-445-1040	Beach Eye Care Dr. Ben Pezik 5-1 Market Lane Ph: 705-429-3937	
Comly Eye Care Dr. Andrew Comly 69 First Street Ph: 705-444-0008	Comly Eye Care Dr. Andrew Comly 1470 Mosley Street Ph: 705-429-2015	