

What can be done if the retinal screener detects any warning signs?

- You may need to be monitored more frequently by the retinal screening service.
- Or, you will be referred to an ophthalmologist (eye specialist) for assessment. He may then refer you for treatment.
- He will do a number of tests on your eyes to decide what treatment will be most effective for you.

How can I prevent problems with my eyes from developing?

- Keeping your blood sugar (glucose) levels well controlled reduces your risk of developing eye disease or delays the onset.
- If your blood sugar levels are high, they should be reduced gradually - discuss this with your diabetes nurse.
- Control your weight, your cholesterol levels and your blood pressure through diet and exercise.
- Have a regular appointment with your optician and retinal screening service at least once a year. It is much easier to stop eye disease from developing into something serious if it is caught in the early stages.



Anyone who uses an Abbott Diabetes Care meter can become a member of our **Friends for Life programme.**

Once a member, you are entitled to:

- FREE help and advice
- FREE replacement products and batteries
- FREE monitoring support
- FREE educational materials

To join, send back the warranty card that came with your Abbott Diabetes Care meter. Or, call the Customer Care Line or register online at **www.friendsforlife.org.uk**

UK Customer Care Line – 0500 467 466

(Mon-Fri, 8am-5.30pm)

Ireland Customer Care Line – 1 800 776633

(Mon-Fri, 8am-5.30pm)

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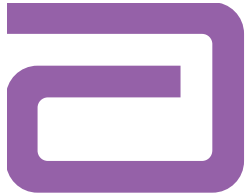


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Looking after your eyes



What's the problem?

Eye problems can develop when you have diabetes of any type, whether it is controlled with insulin, tablets or by diet and exercise alone. Symptoms can be detected during an examination by a qualified retinal screener, and the earlier they are spotted, the more successfully they can be treated.

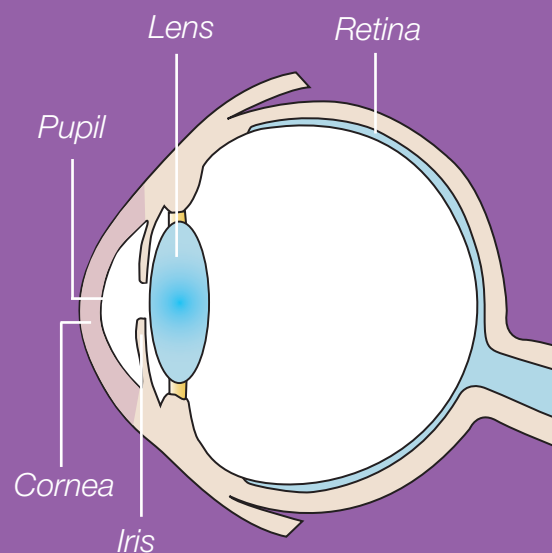
Diabetes affects the blood circulation in your retina (the back of your eye), which causes changes in the blood vessels. The changes occur so slowly, over many years, that you probably won't be aware of any difference until the problem becomes acute and your vision is affected.

The eye condition most commonly associated with diabetes is called diabetic retinopathy. Diabetes is also associated with cataracts and glaucoma.

Have your eyes examined by a qualified retinal screener at least once a year - more frequently if signs of eye disease have already been detected. There should be a retinal screening service for people with diabetes in your area - check with your hospital clinic or your GP surgery.

What happens in an eye examination?

- Your vision will be measured using a vision chart.
- Some drops will be put in your eyes to dilate (open up) your pupils. This may sting briefly at first. Dilating your pupils helps the retinal screener to see more of the inside of your eye.
- Your retinal screening service will be looking for warning signs of developing eye disease.
- You should have your eyes photographed so that pictures can be compared each time your eyes are examined.



What is diabetic retinopathy?

There are four stages to the condition. They develop as problems with the capillaries (tiny blood vessels) that nourish your retina gradually become more severe:

1. The capillaries in your retina weaken and may leak small drops of fluid or form tiny, balloon-like swellings.
2. Some capillaries may become blocked.
3. As more capillaries become blocked, areas of your retina don't get the oxygen they need.
4. New capillaries develop to bring oxygen to the damaged tissue. This can result in blurred vision. The new capillaries:
 - Grow on the surface of your retina and in the clear fluid in the middle of your eye.
 - Are very small and fragile, and can bleed easily, causing further damage to the retina.

Even if you don't think you have any problems with your eyes, you should always attend your retinal screening appointments. Problems may be developing at the back of your eyes that you don't know about. Ultimately, if left untreated, diabetic retinopathy can cause severe damage or even blindness. The earlier it is spotted, the easier it is to treat.

