

Diabetic Retinopathy – Basics

What is the retina?

The retina is the delicate, light-sensitive tissue that covers the interior wall of the eye. Like the film in a camera, it receives images projected through the lens of the eye. The retina then sends these images to your brain through the optic nerve. When the retina is damaged, your vision may become impaired. Damage to the retina may be caused by injury, illness or as a result of aging.

What is the vitreous?

The vitreous is a gel-like substance that fills the back cavity of the eye and is loosely attached to the retina.

What is a Vitreo-Retinal specialist?

Retinal specialists are eye physicians and surgeons who focus on diseases in the back of the eye such as macular degeneration, diabetic disease, retinal detachment, eye trauma and intraocular infection

What is diabetic retinopathy?

Diabetic retinopathy is a complication of diabetes that weakens the blood vessels that supply nourishment to the retina. When the weak vessels leak, swell or develop thin branches, vision loss may occur. In its advanced stages, the disease can cause blurred or cloudy vision, floaters and blind spots and eventually, blindness.

Is retina check up –a must for every diabetic patient?

Yes because very often ,you may not have any symptoms .

What are the symptoms?

Floaters, flashes of light ,decreased vision, distorted central vision and frequent change of glass numbers. If you have any of these, get your retina checked up.

How is diabetic retinopathy diagnosed?

A thorough clinical check up by the retina specialist is required. If required, he may advise you for specific tests such as OCT(Optical Coherence Tomography), Fluroscein angiography etc.to diagnose the problem.

How can diabetic retinopathy be treated?

The most important part of treatment is keeping your diabetes under strict control and reducing your stress levels...often this is enough

If the problem is more complex,,Dr.Sachin Kabra may advice you further treatment in the form of retinal laser treatment , injections (intravitreal anti-VEGF injections or a surgery (Vitrectomy) if the problem is very serious.

The earlier problems are found, the easier they are to treat and in general, the better the visual results. Early and periodic dilated eye exams are very important.

Can diabetic retinopathy be prevented?

Your risk of diabetic retinopathy can be reduced if you follow your prescribed diet and medications, exercise regularly, control your high blood pressure and cholesterol and avoid alcohol and cigarettes. Regular eye exams are an integral part of making sure your eyes are healthy.