

# Glaucoma



**FIGHTING  
BLINDNESS  
CANADA**

Glaucoma is an eye disease where increased eye pressure (intraocular pressure) can damage the optic nerve. Glaucoma can lead to permanent vision loss and it is one of the leading causes of blindness in people over 60. Some other diseases increase the risk of developing glaucoma, so it is important to get regular eye exams even if you are under 60 years old and do not have any symptoms. Early detection and treatment are important to prevent vision loss.



## PRIMARY OPEN-ANGLE GLAUCOMA

Primary open-angle glaucoma is the most common type of glaucoma where fluid in the eye does not drain properly. At the beginning there are usually no symptoms with this type of glaucoma, and it can go unnoticed for many years before vision loss occurs. Some symptoms of open-angle glaucoma are:

- Blind spots on your central or peripheral (side) vision
- Tunnel vision

## ANGLE-CLOSURE GLAUCOMA

Angle-closure glaucoma is a type of glaucoma that can develop much more quickly and can cause pain and other symptoms. Angle-closure glaucoma occurs when the iris (the colored part of your eye) “shifts” and blocks the part of the eye that drains fluid. Fluid can build up very quickly, and it is important that you see a doctor as soon as possible for treatment to prevent permanent vision loss. Some symptoms of angle-closure glaucoma are:

- Eye pain and redness
- Nausea
- Blurry vision
- Bad headache
- Seeing halos (circles) around lights

**There are also other less common types of glaucoma which are usually variations of primary open-angle or angle-closure glaucoma.**

Fighting Blindness Canada is the largest charitable funder of vision research in Canada. We offer hope to Canadians by funding the best, most promising research that is driving treatments and cures for blinding eye diseases.

# HEALTHY HABITS TO HELP PREVENT VISION LOSS

If you are diagnosed with glaucoma, it is important to practice healthy habits to protect your vision.

- Monitor** Pay attention to new changes in your vision. If you experience sudden eye pain or vision loss, call your eye doctor immediately, or go to your nearest emergency department.
- Appointments** Book regular appointments with your eye doctor to keep track of any changes in your vision and check your intraocular pressure. If you cannot make an appointment, call your doctor to reschedule in a timely manner. Talk to your doctor if you are concerned about missing appointments because of the current COVID-19 pandemic.
- Medication** Take all your prescribed medication, including medicated eye drops, as instructed by your doctor.
- Lifestyle** Practice healthy habits like eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise. Maintain a healthy blood pressure. If you smoke, consider quitting.
- Educate** Learn about your condition, symptoms, and treatment. The more you know, the more confidence you will have in managing your glaucoma

## ASSESS YOUR RISK OF VISION LOSS

Bring this handout to your next eye exam (i.e. optometrist, ophthalmologist).

Write down your questions in advance and ask your doctor to explain any answers you may be uncertain of.

Risk factors	My notes	Questions for my doctor
Appointment	The last time I had an eye exam was: ..... .....	
Vision changes	I have noticed these changes to my vision: ..... .....	
Eye pressure	At my last exam, my eye pressure was: ..... .....	
Blood pressure	The last time I checked, my blood pressure was: ..... .....	
Other symptoms	I have noticed these things about my health: ..... .....	

If you have questions about glaucoma, you can connect with FBC's Health Information Line at **1.888.626.2995** or by email **healthinfo@fightingblindness.ca**.