The Connection Between Diabetes and Your Vision

Comprehensive eye exams are important for many reasons. Along with eye-related concerns, eye doctors may be able to detect other health issues during an eye exam.

Is there a connection between vision and diabetes?

"The answer is yes," says VSP network eye doctor Maria Cristina Zamora, OD. Diabetes affects the blood vessels, and the back of the eye is the only place in the body where an eye doctor can directly view the blood vessels.

If left untreated, those with diabetes can develop a condition called diabetic retinopathy, where the blood vessels in your retina become damaged. "In fact, diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in adults age 29-74," says Dr. Zamora. The early stages of diabetic retinopathy often have no noticeable symptoms, so Dr. Zamora recommends that everyone with diabetes have a comprehensive eye exam once a year.

Most diabetes-related vision issue can be prevented, but early detection is key, and an eye exam can do just that.

"If there's a problem happening, your eye doctor is sometimes the first to detect that change," Dr. Zamora explained. "This is why it's so important you make sure to get your annual eye exam, which should also include dilation. In many ways, the eyes can be a window into your overall health."

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows 30.3 million people have diabetes in the U.S., however, 7.2 million people go undiagnosed. Don't wait to get you or your loved ones checked if you suspect diabetes. Find an eye doctor near you and schedule your annual eye exam by visiting VSP.com.

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