



Diabetic Retinopathy



Overview

This eye disorder affects people with diabetes. It happens gradually. You may not notice it until your vision is damaged. And without proper care, it can lead to blindness.

Causes

What causes diabetic retinopathy? It's linked to chronic high blood sugar. Over time, this narrows the tiny blood vessels that supply the retina. Eventually, they become blocked. New vessels grow to replace them, but they aren't as strong. They swell and leak blood and fluid. Scar tissue can form on your retina, causing your retina to detach. The damage in your eye may make it hard for your eye to drain fluid properly. This leads to a pressure buildup that harms your optic nerve.

Symptoms

At first, you can have diabetic retinopathy and no symptoms. But as it progresses, your vision is affected. Your eyesight may change throughout the day. You may see spots we call "floaters." Your vision may be blurry. It may be hard for you to tell colors apart. And, you may start to lose areas of vision. You can lose your sight completely.

Treatment

In the early stage of this disease, you may not need treatment. Monitoring, along with diabetes management, may be enough. But as it gets worse, you may need medications or surgery. Your doctor will create a care plan that's right for you.