DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

KANIKSU
COMMUNITY HEALTH

WHAT IS DIABETIC RETINOPATHY?

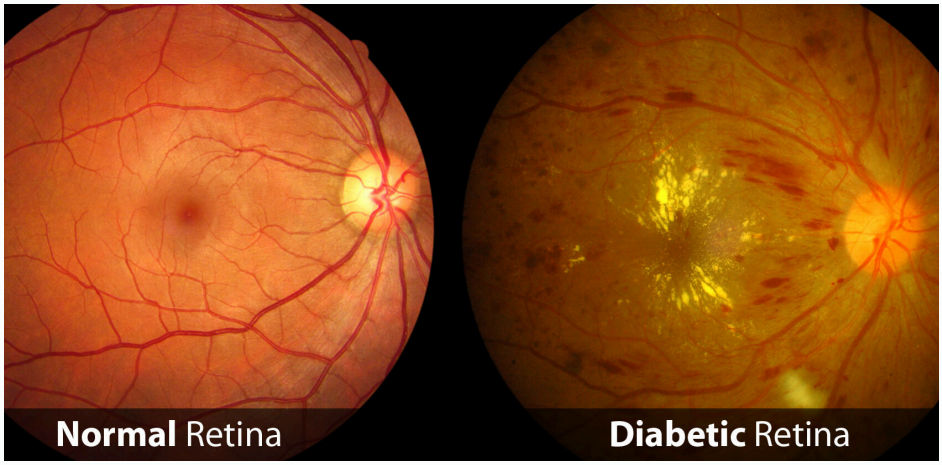
Retinopathy is a microvascular complication of diabetes, which means it involves the small blood vessels throughout the retina in the back of each eye. The retina tissue is highly sensitive to light and filled with millions of cells (also known as rods and cones). These cells send visual information to your brain through the optic nerve, giving you the ability to see.

There are currently more than 37 million American adults living with diabetes. Almost three times that many adults (96 million) are living with prediabetes and 90% don't know they have it.

Anyone with diabetes is at risk for diabetes-related eye diseases such as diabetic retinopathy, macular edema, glaucoma, and cataracts.

Diabetic retinopathy is the most common diabetic eye disease and a leading cause of blindness in American adults. The number of individuals with diabetic retinopathy is predicted to increase by nearly 50% to over 11 million people by 2030.

Fortunately, retinopathy is usually very treatable, especially if you catch it in the earliest stages during your annual eye exam.



WHAT CAUSES DIABETIC RETINOPATHY?

Retinopathy is usually caused by persistently high blood sugar (glucose) levels. Damage to your eyes begins when glucose blocks blood vessels that go to your retina.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF DIABETIC RETINOPATHY?

Loss of Vision	Distorted Vision	Blurred Vision
Inability to see color	Dark strings or colorless spots floating in visual field	Involuntary eye movement
Double vision	Deteriorating night vision	Eye pain or discomfort

In early stages, diabetic retinopathy may not have any obvious signs or symptoms, but finding it early can help protect your vision.

Have questions?

Call 208.263.7101
kchnorthidaho.org

WHAT ARE THE STAGES OF DIABETIC RETINOPATHY?

There are four stages of retinopathy based on two categories of retinopathy, as outlined below:

The Two Categories of Retinopathy	
Non-proliferative retinopathy (NPDR):	No presence of abnormal blood vessel growth within the affected retina tissue
Proliferative retinopathy (PDR):	Presence of abnormal cell growth within the cells of the affected retina tissue
The Four Stages of Retinopathy	
Stage I (Mild)	- Defined by swelling of the blood vessels in small areas of the retina, also referred to as micro-aneurysms -Easily detected
Stage II (Moderate)	-Includes characteristics of Stage I, with more swelling & actual distortion of the blood vessels in the retina -Some may develop diabetic macular edema
Stage III (Severe)	-Retina is deprived of healthy blood flow, due to a significant portion of blood vessels are damaged. -Fluid leakage releases growth factors into the retina, which falsely instruct the retina to grow new abnormal blood vessels, which can eventually lead to a more severe stage of retinopathy.
Stage IV	-Defined by the presence of abnormal blood vessel growth. These cells are not healthy and are prone to bleeding, fluid leakage, and other abnormalities which will threaten your vision -Scar tissue can develop from repeated swelling of the cells throughout your retina, which can lead to retinal detachment -Retinal detachment is when the retina pulls away from the underlying tissue o the eye. This is usually painless, but should be treated immediately! If left untreated, this can lead to permanent vision loss

WHAT CAN I DO?

Retinopathy progresses overtime, which is why it's extremely important to detect retinopathy sooner, rather than later! With annual eye exams and early detection, the better the chance of preventing it from progressing and/or treating the existing damage. Additionally, maintaining an optimal A1C of less than 7% will give you the best possible prevention of diabetes-related eye complications.

Better yet - schedule your annual Diabetic Retinopathy screening at KCH today! Why wait?

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