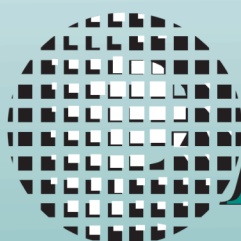


**COMPREHENSIVE
EYE CARE
UNDER ONE
ROOF**



Florida Eye *Microsurgical Institute, Inc.*

Risk Factors for Glaucoma



**Yearly, Physicians at Florida Eye Microsurgical Institute Perform
Thousands of Glaucoma-Related Eye Exams and Procedures**

Are You at Risk for Glaucoma?



Unfortunately, *Everyone* Is ... Some More Than Others

"Glaucoma is the silent thief of sight, as it is painless and people sometimes don't realize they have a problem until they have lost significant amounts of vision. Anybody with a family history, diabetes or nearsightedness is at increased risk and should be screened annually." — *Dr. Jason Gorscak, M.D., Refractive Cataract Surgery, Glaucoma & Comprehensive Ophthalmologic Care*



Glaucoma damages the optic nerve and gradually steals vision without warning. Glaucoma has to do with the pressure inside the eye, known as intraocular pressure (IOP). When the aqueous humor (a clear liquid that normally flows in and out of the eye) cannot

drain properly, pressure builds up in the eye. The resulting increase in IOP can damage the optic nerve and lead to vision loss.

Nearly half of those with glaucoma do not know they have it, and as a result, by the time they see a physician, many already have experienced severe vision loss.



Again, glaucoma can destroy vision without any apparent signs or symptoms, and this is why it is extremely important to know your particular risk factors. Knowing these factors will help to determine when and how often to have your eyes examined by your eye doctor. Usually, those at high risk for glaucoma should get a complete eye exam, including eye dilation, every one or two years.

Florida Eye Strongly Urges Everyone to Know Their Personal Risk Factors for Developing This Sight-Stealing Disease

The Top Six Risk Factors For Developing Glaucoma

1

Age

Glaucoma is much more common among older people. You are six times more likely to get glaucoma if you are over 60 years old.



2

Ethnicity

A) African Americans

Glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible vision loss and blindness among African Americans and people of African descent. Glaucoma is six to eight times more common in African Americans than in Caucasians, and African Americans are more likely to experience permanent blindness as a result. African Americans are also more likely to develop glaucoma at



a younger age than the rest of the population (60). *If you are African American, Florida Eye recommends comprehensive eye evaluations as follows: 20 to 29 years of age: every 3 to 5 years; 30 to 64 years of age: every 2 to 4 years; 65 years and older: every 1 to 2 years.*

B) Hispanics in Older Age Groups

The Glaucoma Research Foundation released study findings indicating that the risk for Hispanic populations is greater than those of predominantly European ancestry, and that the risk increases among Hispanics over age 60. *Florida Eye recommends that people of Hispanic ancestry have regular, comprehensive eye evaluations. This is especially important over the age of 60.*



C) Asians

People of Asian descent appear to be at increased risk for angle-closure glaucoma, perhaps because of their shallower anterior chamber depth. People of Japanese descent are at higher risk for normal-tension glaucoma. *Florida Eye recommends that people of Asian ancestry have regular, comprehensive eye evaluations. This is especially important over the age of 60.*

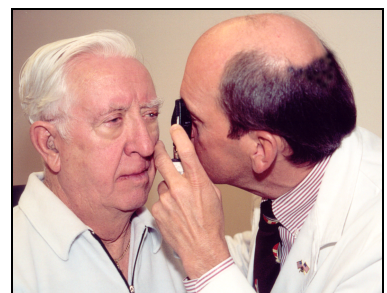


3

Family Members with Glaucoma

Research shows that glaucoma may have a genetic link, meaning there's a defect in one or more genes that may cause certain individuals to be unusually susceptible to the disease. A form of juvenile open-angle glaucoma has been clearly linked to genetic abnormalities.

The most common type of glaucoma, primary open-angle glaucoma, is hereditary. If members of your immediate family have glaucoma, you are at a much



higher risk of developing glaucoma than the rest of the population.

Family history increases risk of glaucoma four to nine times.

4 Steroid Users

There is some evidence linking corticosteroid use to glaucoma. A 1997 study reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association demonstrated a 40% increase in the incidence of ocular hypertension and open-angle glaucoma in adults who require approximately 14 to 35 puffs of steroid inhaler to control asthma. This is a very high dose, only required in cases of severe asthma.



There is also some evidence to suggest that using corticosteroids for prolonged periods of time may put you at risk of developing secondary glaucoma. This is especially true if you use corticosteroid eye drops. Corticosteroids are taken for rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, asthma, allergies and many other conditions, and are ingested orally, topically, by injection and by inhaler and intranasal spray.

5 Eye/Medical Conditions



A) Nearsightedness

If you are nearsighted (high myopia) it generally means that objects in the distance

look fuzzy without glasses or contacts. Being nearsighted increases the risk of developing glaucoma.

B) Diabetes

A common complication of diabetes is diabetic eye disease (a group of sight-threatening eye problems that people with diabetes may develop). Glaucoma is one of these diseases.

C) Hypothyroidism

Because thyroid hormone affects growth, development, and many cellular processes, low or inadequate thyroid hormone (hypothyroidism) has widespread consequences for the body. Studies show patients diagnosed with thyroid problems were 38% more likely to have been diagnosed with glaucoma.

D) Hypertension

More than 65 million Americans age 60 and over have high blood pressure, or hypertension, and African Americans are even more vulnerable to the condition.

E) Elevated Internal Eye Pressure (Intraocular Pressure or IOP)

If your intraocular pressure is higher than normal, you're at increased risk of developing glaucoma, though not everyone with elevated intraocular pressure develops the disease. (Severe eye injuries can result in increased eye pressure.)

F) Corneal Thickness

Corneal thickness is an important factor in accurately diagnosing eye pressure (IOP) because it can mask an accurate reading of eye pressure, causing doctors to treat you for a condition that may not really exist or to treat you unnecessarily when are normal.

G) Migraine Headaches

Studies of people who suffer from severe migraine headaches have demonstrated a possible risk factor for glaucoma.

H) Retinal Detachment, Eye Inflammations and Eye Tumors

Each of these can also cause glaucoma.

6

Eye Injuries

Blunt injuries that “bruise” the eye, injuries that penetrate the eye and injuries that dislocate the lens can damage or close the eye’s drainage system, leading to traumatic glaucoma. Injury to the eye may cause secondary open-angle glaucoma. This type of glaucoma can occur immediately after the injury or years later. Certain types of eye surgery also may trigger secondary glaucoma.

The most common causes of these types of injuries are usually sports-related, such as baseball, football or boxing.



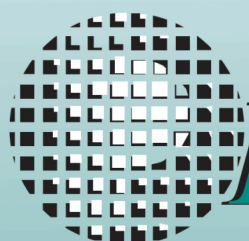
How Is Glaucoma Diagnosed?



“Glaucoma is diagnosed through a comprehensive eye examination. To establish a diagnosis of glaucoma, several factors must be present, and because glaucoma is a progressive disease, meaning it worsens over time, a change in the appearance of the optic nerve, a loss of nerve tissue, and a corresponding loss of vision confirms the diagnosis. Patients should be closely followed with routine comprehensive exams to monitor for change.” — *Dr. Barry Schechter, M.D., F.A.A.O., Director of Cornea & Cataract Services External Diseases & Comprehensive Ophthalmology*

Learn more about Glaucoma cutting edge evaluations, testing and treatment options and procedures at Florida Eye.

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