

Glaucoma: Know the Facts!

What is Glaucoma¹?

- 👁️ Glaucoma is a disease that damages the optic nerve, the part of our eye that carries the images we see to our brain. Glaucoma is an extremely serious eye disorder which can cause blindness if not treated early.
- 👁️ Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness in Ireland.
- 👁️ Early detection is key to slowing progression and preventing later sight loss due to glaucoma.
- 👁️ Regular eye tests are the only way to detect 'symptomless' glaucoma early so that it can be diagnosed by an eye doctor and treated in the community where possible. At a late stage, glaucoma is irreversible and results in sight loss and blindness.
- 👁️ Based on our growing and ageing population, the incidence of glaucoma is expected to rise by 33% in Ireland over the coming decade
- 👁️ Eye pressure is largely independent of blood pressure.

Risk Factors¹

- » **AGE:** Chronic glaucoma becomes much more common with increasing age. It is uncommon below the age of 40 but affects one per cent of people over this age and five per cent over 65.
- » **RACE:** If you are of African origin you are more at risk of chronic glaucoma and it may come on somewhat earlier and be more severe. So make sure that you have regular tests.
- » **FAMILY HISTORY:** If you have a close relative who has chronic glaucoma then you should have an eye test at regular intervals. You should advise other members of your family to do the same. This is especially important if you are aged over 40 when tests should be done every year.
- » **SHORT SIGHT:** People with a high degree of short sight are more prone to chronic glaucoma. Diabetes is believed to increase the risk of developing this condition.

Treatment¹

Treatment for glaucoma works very well if detected early and usually involves eye drops alone.

References

Ref 1: <http://www.eyedoctors.ie/your-eye-health/eye-conditions.asp> [accessed 13.12.2016]

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