

January is all about “Glaucoma Awareness and your precious eyesight

- **Eyesight is a gift that none of us can afford to lose.**
- **But in our lifetime, the delicate eye can undergo several health-related problems, some easily treated, others irreversibly damaging.**
- **Glaucoma is one among the latter kind.**

In a world that is witnessing rapid progress in the arena of science and technology, one hopes that researchers can find answers to some of the most vexing medical maladies. Glaucoma is one of them. Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the world.

What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a general term used to describe a group of eye disorders that damage the optic nerve. Damage to the delicate optic nerve leads to vision loss. In most cases of Glaucoma, fluid builds up in the front part of the eye -- putting pressure (intraocular pressure (IOP)/eye pressure) on the eye, gradually damaging the optic nerve.

Left untreated, this eye pressure can permanently affect vision. Treatments — including eye drops, laser treatments and surgeries — can slow down vision loss and save your sight.

What causes Glaucoma?

According to [Cleveland Clinic](#), glaucoma can occur without any cause but is affected by many factors. The most important of which is the intraocular eye pressure. Your eyes produce a fluid called aqueous humor that nourishes them. This liquid flows through the pupil to the front of the eye. In a healthy eye, the fluid leaves through a drainage canal located between the iris and cornea.

Is Glaucoma curable? If not now, maybe in the near future?

At the moment we have no treatment that can restore the lost vision. We will need to insert new nerve cells, reconnect the new cells to the cells that are still there, and make those connections work with the existing connections in the way that they did originally. Doctors and researchers across the world have taken the first steps in this process, it will be years before the successful restoration of vision in a human eye is possible

Why is glaucoma not caught early?

One of the reasons that glaucoma's damage is not noticed early on is that it typically affects only

one eye at first. The other eye is still fully functional. Since the brain converts the two separate signals from both eyes into a single picture, we see it and we think nothing is missing. Until of course, too late.

Can glaucoma affect both eyes?

Most people develop glaucoma in both eyes, although the disease initially may be worse in one eye. Certain types of glaucoma appear to cause moderate or severe damage in one eye initially, while the other eye may be mildly affected. Over time, the disease damages both eyes. People with closed-angle glaucoma in one eye have a raised likelihood of developing the same type of glaucoma in the other eye within five to 10 years.

Which hospitals are the finest in glaucoma treatment?

According to the [Global Clinic Rating](#) (GCR) website, the Wilmer Eye Institute at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Cleveland Clinic's Cole Eye Institute, the Jules Stein Eye Institute, and the Ahad Mahootchi, MD, PA are the four top-most among the best all-around ophthalmology centres in the United States. These are also top-ranked clinics for glaucoma treatment. ()

Indian-origin Dr Pradeep Ramulu, MD, PhD is the Chief of the Glaucoma Division at the Johns Hopkins -- Wilmer Eye Institute.

Overview

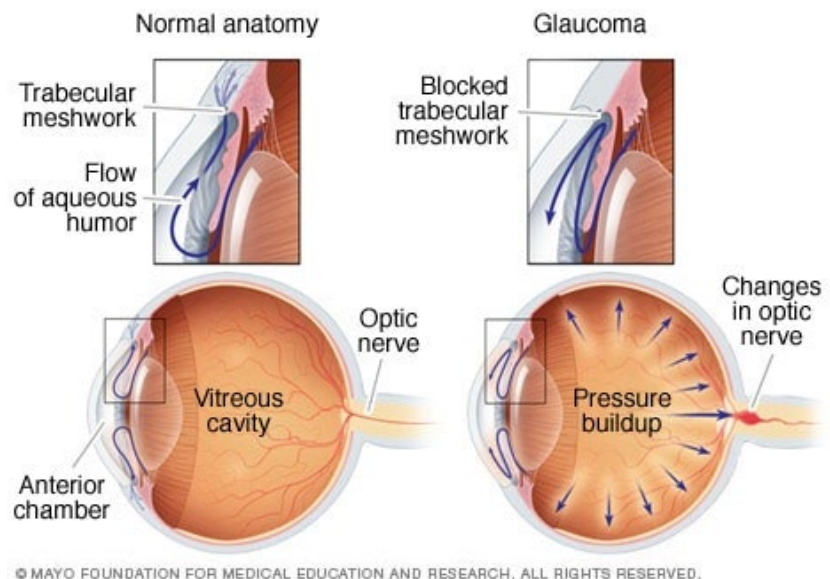
Glaucoma is a group of eye conditions that damage the optic nerve, the health of which is vital for good vision. This damage is often caused by an abnormally high pressure in your eye.

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness for people over the age of 60. It can occur at any age but is more common in older adults.

Many forms of glaucoma have no warning signs. The effect is so gradual that you may not notice a change in vision until the condition is at an advanced stage.

Because vision loss due to glaucoma can't be recovered, it's important to have regular eye exams that include measurements of your eye pressure so a diagnosis can be made in its early stages and treated appropriately. If glaucoma is recognized early, vision loss can be slowed or prevented. If you have the condition, you'll generally need treatment for the rest of your life.

Treatment includes eye drops, medications, and surgery.



Symptoms

The signs and symptoms of glaucoma vary depending on the type and stage of your condition. For example:

Open-angle glaucoma

- Patchy blind spots in your side (peripheral) or central vision, frequently in both eyes
- Tunnel vision in the advanced stages

Acute angle-closure glaucoma

- Severe headache
- Eye pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Blurred vision
- Halos around lights
- Eye redness

If left untreated, glaucoma will eventually cause blindness. Even with treatment, about 15 percent of people with glaucoma become blind in at least one eye within 20 years.

When to see a doctor

Promptly go to an emergency room or an eye doctor's (ophthalmologist's) office if you experience some of the symptoms of acute angle-closure glaucoma, such as severe headache, eye pain and blurred vision.

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