



# Glaucoma Information Sheet

## What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is an eye condition that can slowly damage the nerve inside your eye that allows you to see. It usually happens over time and does not cause pain. Many people do not know they have glaucoma until they start to lose their vision or find out during an eye exam.

## What Causes It?

There is a clear fluid inside your eye that needs to drain out to keep your eye pressure at a healthy level. If the fluid drains too slowly, the pressure inside the eye can become too high. Over time, high pressure can damage the nerve in your eye and cause you to lose parts of your vision.

Some people get glaucoma even when their eye pressure is not high. This may be due to poor blood flow or other changes in the eye that affect the nerve.

## Who Is at Risk?

You are more likely to get glaucoma if you:

- Have high eye pressure
- Are over 40
- Have a family history of glaucoma
- Are African, Hispanic, or Asian
- Have diabetes or high blood pressure
- Use steroid medications for a long time or in high doses

## What Are the Symptoms?

**Glaucoma often has no symptoms at first.** As it gets worse:

- Side (peripheral) vision may slowly get worse
- Central vision is usually affected later
- If untreated, it can lead to blindness

Because glaucoma often starts without symptoms, **regular eye exams are very important.**



## How Is It Diagnosed?

Glaucoma is usually found during an eye exam, which may include:

- Checking eye pressure
- Looking at the nerve in your eye (with a microscope, scan, or photo)
- Other tests of your eye and vision

## Treatment Options

Glaucoma cannot be cured, and lost vision cannot be brought back. But treatment can protect your remaining vision. Your doctor may recommend:

- Eye drops
- Laser treatment
- Surgery

## Living with Glaucoma

- Be sure to use your eye drops every day, as prescribed
- Go to all follow-up visits to monitor your glaucoma
- Tell your doctor if you have side effects or trouble using your eye drops

## Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can glaucoma be cured?

A: No, but it can usually be controlled with long-term treatment.

Q: Can I go blind from glaucoma?

A: Yes, if it is not treated. With proper care, most people keep useful vision for life.

Q: Will I need surgery?

A: Many people do well with drops or laser. Your doctor will discuss whether surgery is the best choice for you.

This document was reviewed by Dr. Steve Arshinoff.