



the armenian eyecare project
bringing sight to armenian eyes



GLAUCOMA

Glaucoma is a dangerous disease which can cause irreversible damage to the optic nerve. Glaucoma prevents the visual message from being sent from the eye to the brain and leads to eventual blindness unless it is recognized and treated. In most cases damage to the optic nerve results from elevated pressure within the eye that is caused by a backup of fluid in the eye. Glaucoma can develop in one or both eyes. In the early stages of the disease **there are NO signs and that is why it is so dangerous and needs regular check-ups in order to find this disease in its early, treatable stages.** Without diagnosis and treatment, vision becomes affected, which can progress to blindness.

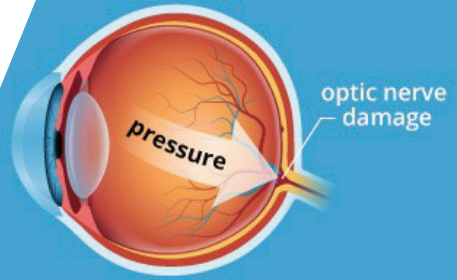
Who are at risk ?

- Everyone over age 40
- People with a family history of glaucoma
- People with High Myopia (nearsightedness)
- People with Diabetes
- People with Hypertension
- People who had an Eye Injury or Surgery or Inflammation within the eye
- People with History of steroid use
- People with Migraine headache and peripheral vasospasm
- People with Sleep-related breathing disorder
- Gender: Male

What are the symptoms ?

In **open-angle glaucoma**, which is more common, **at first, there are no symptoms.** **Open-angle glaucoma tends to run in families.** Your risk is higher if you have a parent or grandparent with **open-angle glaucoma.** Open-angle glaucoma is a chronic form that slowly causes loss of vision. This is often so slow that the patient may not even realize it. Vision stays normal, and there is no pain. However, as the disease progresses, a person with glaucoma may notice his or her side vision gradually failing. Objects in front may still be seen clearly, but objects to the side may be missed, almost as if one is looking through a tube. As the disease worsens, the field of vision narrows and blindness results.

In **angle-closure glaucoma** the eye pressure increases suddenly. Symptoms include redness of the eye and blurred vision as well as severe pain in one eye, in the brow or headache, nausea and vomiting, rainbow-like halos around lights. This is a medical



Normal vision



Glaucoma

emergency and without treatment the eye can become blind in as few as one or two days. If you have had angle-closure glaucoma attack in one eye, you are at risk for it in the second eye. Your health care provider is likely to treat your second eye to prevent the first attack in that eye.

How is a glaucoma detected?

The only way to diagnose glaucoma is by having a complete eye exam, including also eye pressure measurement, testing field of vision and checking the back of the eye –optic nerve.



How is a glaucoma treated?

The goal of treatment is to reduce your eye pressure. Treatment depends on the type of glaucoma that you have.

Open-angle glaucoma

- If you have open-angle glaucoma, you will probably be given eye drops.
- You may need more than one type. Most people can be treated with eye drops. If drops alone do not work, you may need other treatment:
- Laser treatment uses a painless laser to open the channels where fluid flows out.
- If drops and laser treatment do not work, you may need surgery. The doctor will open a new channel so fluid can escape. This will help lower your pressure.
- Recently, new implants have been developed that can help treat glaucoma in people having cataract surgery.

Acute angle glaucoma

An acute angle-closure attack is a medical emergency. You can become blind in a few days if you are not treated.

- You may be given drops, pills, and medicine given through a vein to lower your eye pressure.
- Some people also need an emergency operation, called an iridotomy. The doctor uses a laser to open a new channel in the iris. Sometimes this is done with surgery. The new channel relieves the attack and will prevent another attack.
- To help prevent an attack in the other eye, the procedure will often be performed on the other eye. This may be done even if it has never had an attack.

Prognosis

Open-angle glaucoma cannot be cured. You can manage it and keep your sight by following your doctor's directions.

Angle-closure glaucoma is a medical emergency. You need treatment right away to save your vision. If you have severe eye pain or a sudden loss of vision, get immediate medical help. These may be signs of a closed-angle glaucoma.

Prevention

You cannot prevent open-angle glaucoma. Most people have no symptoms. **But you can help prevent vision loss.**

- A complete eye exam can help find open-angle glaucoma early, when it is easier to treat.
- All adults should have a complete eye exam by the age of 40.
- If you are at risk for glaucoma, you should have a complete eye exam sooner than age 40.
- You should have regular eye exams as recommended by your provider.
- If you are at risk for angle-closure glaucoma, which will be identified by special eye examination named gonioscopy, your doctor may recommend treatment -a laser procedure called YAG laser peripheral iridotomy making a small hole in the iris, which prevents from developing an acute angle-closure attack following by vision loss.

