



**Macular
Disease
Foundation**
AUSTRALIA



**DIABETIC EYE
DISEASE
REDUCE YOUR RISK**

How does diabetes affect your vision?

Diabetes is a complex, chronic condition characterised by high blood glucose (sugar) levels. Over time diabetes can affect many parts of the body, including your eyes. There are several conditions of the eye that can be caused by diabetes. These conditions are collectively known as diabetic eye disease. Everyone with diabetes is at risk of diabetic eye disease.

Vision loss from diabetic eye disease can have a huge impact your independence and quality of life. The good news is that most vision loss can be prevented with careful management of diabetes, early detection of changes in your eyes and, if necessary, early treatment.

What can you do to lower your risk?

1. Get regular eye exams

Diabetic eye disease causes changes to the back of the eye that you may not notice. Regular eye exams with an optometrist can identify diabetic eye disease at its earliest stage before vision loss occurs. The earlier you take action, the greater your chance of saving your sight.

Studies have also shown that the presence of diabetic eye disease can be an early warning of other diabetes complications.

If you have diabetes, it is important to have an eye exam when you are first diagnosed, then regular eye exams at least every two years.

If you have diabetic eye disease, or you are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, it is important to have an eye exam at least once a year, or as often as advised by your optometrist.

Call MDFA on 1800 111 709 or visit mdfoundation.com.au/find-an-optometrist to

find an optometrist near you. You do not need a referral to visit an optometrist. To register for free reminders for your diabetes eye checks, call KeepSight on 1800 533 774 or visit keepsight.org.au

2. Review your diet

A healthy diet, as well as regular exercise, can help to lower your blood pressure, reduce weight, reduce stress, and support insulin to work better, all of which can be beneficial for diabetes management and therefore your risk of diabetic eye disease.

This information pack includes simple recipes that can support your diabetes management. Before you make any changes to your diet, make sure you discuss this with your GP.

3. Visit your GP regularly

If you have diabetes, it is recommended to visit your GP at least once a year. Your GP can arrange a management plan that can ensure you are receiving proper diabetes care. Talk to your GP about a GP Management Plan today

4. Quit smoking

Smoking significantly increases your risk of diabetes and its related conditions. It also increases blood pressure and blood glucose levels, making it harder to manage diabetes. If you smoke, talk to your GP about what support you need to quit. You can also contact the Quitline on 13 78 48 or visit quit.org.au



National Helpline 1800 111 709



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