



# Have you been diagnosed with Glaucoma?

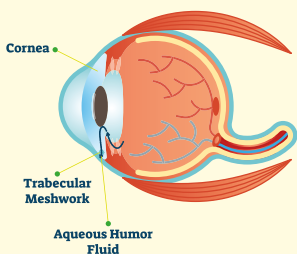
Don't lose sight of  
what's important

# What is Glaucoma?

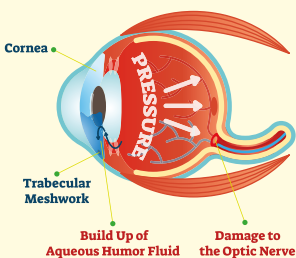
**Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that can cause vision loss and blindness by damaging a nerve in the back of your eye called the optic nerve.**

It's usually caused by fluid building up in the front part of the eye, which increases pressure inside the eye, referred to as intra-ocular pressure (IOP), often because the fluid can't drain away as it should.

## GLAUCOMA



**NORMAL EYE**



**GLAUCOMA**



Glaucoma is a common eye disease affecting millions of people and is still one of the leading causes of irreversible blindness in the world.

Glaucoma symptoms can start so slowly that you may not notice them. Glaucoma is usually detected at a routine eye test by an optician and then your treatment is managed by an ophthalmologist (specialist eye doctor).

Over time, you may slowly lose vision, usually starting with your side (peripheral) vision – especially the part of your vision that’s closest to your nose. Because it happens so slowly, many people can’t tell that their vision is changing at first. There’s no cure for glaucoma, but early detection and treatment can often slow the progression and protect your vision. Without treatment, glaucoma can eventually cause blindness.

It can affect people of all ages, but is most common in adults in their 70s and 80s.



**Normal Vision**



**Early Stage  
Glaucoma**



**Later Stage  
Glaucoma**

# Signs and Symptoms

**Glaucoma does not usually cause any symptoms initially. It tends to develop slowly over many years and affects the edges of your vision (peripheral vision) first.**

For this reason, many people do not realise they have glaucoma, and it's often only picked up during a routine eye test.

However, if you do experience symptoms, they might include blurred vision, or seeing rainbow-coloured circles around bright lights.

Both eyes are usually affected, although it may be worse in 1 eye.

**If you develop symptoms of glaucoma suddenly, go to your nearest eye casualty unit or A&E as soon as possible. This is a medical emergency that may require immediate treatment.**

Very occasionally, glaucoma can develop suddenly and cause:





**Intense  
eye pain**



**Nausea and  
vomiting**



**A red eye**



**A headache**



**Tenderness  
around the eyes**



**Seeing rings  
around lights**



**Blurred vision**



# Glaucoma Risk Factors

Anyone can develop Glaucoma, but you're at greater risk if:

- You have a high eye pressure
  - Intra-ocular Pressure (IOP)
- Age > 40 years
- Thinner central cornea
- Family history
- Ethnicity - people of African, Caribbean or Asian origin are at a higher risk
- Other medical conditions – such as cardiovascular disease, short sightedness, long sightedness and diabetes



# The Types of Glaucoma

There are several different types of glaucoma. The most common form of glaucoma is **primary open angle glaucoma**, which typically develops over many years and is often asymptomatic, meaning there are no symptoms, making it difficult to diagnose. It's caused by the drainage channels in the eye becoming gradually clogged over time.

## Other types of glaucoma include:

- Acute angle closure glaucoma – an uncommon type caused by the drainage in the eye becoming suddenly blocked, which can raise the pressure inside the eye very quickly
- Secondary glaucoma – caused by an underlying eye condition, such as inflammation of the eye (uveitis)
- Childhood glaucoma (congenital glaucoma) – a rare type that occurs in very young children, caused by an abnormality of the eye





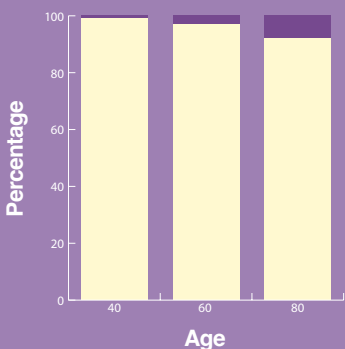
# Prevalence

Primary open angle glaucoma (POAG) affects about 2% of people in the UK older than 40 years.



People over 40 Years

2%



The prevalence increases with increasing age. For example, POAG affects about 1% of people aged 40, about 3% of people aged 60, and about 8% of people aged 80 years.

POAG affects both sexes equally.

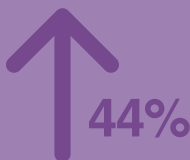


Diagnosed

Undiagnosed

It is thought that around half of all people in the UK with POAG have not been diagnosed as people with early POAG are typically unaware that they have it.

Between 2015 and 2035, the number of people living with glaucoma in the UK is expected to increase by 44%.





**Glaucoma must be diagnosed, treated  
& monitored under the supervision  
of an eye doctor.**

# Glaucoma

## Treatment options

**It's not possible to reverse any loss of vision that has already occurred, but treatment can help stop your vision getting worse.**

The treatment in which you are recommended will depend on the type of glaucoma that you have. Options available include:

- Eye drops – to reduce the pressure in your eyes
- Laser treatment – to open up the blocked drainage tubes or reduce the production of fluid in your eyes
- Surgery – to improve the drainage of fluid

You will most likely have to go for regular check-ups where you will have your pressures (IOP) and visual fields checked to ensure your treatments are working. Depending on the severity of your condition, this can range from monthly to every 2 years. Having your IOP checked is usually painless and will feel like a quick jet of air on the surface of the eye. Visual field checks will involve you focussing on a central location and often having to respond to a flash of light that moves around the periphery of your vision.

The onset of glaucoma can be slowed down by adhering to the medication or treatment prescribed to you by your eye doctor. Your eye doctor may have to try a few different medications to see which your eyes respond to best.

# How to put in eye drops



**Step 1:** Wash and dry your hands well before applying the eye drops.



**Step 2:** Remove the cap of the product.



**Step 3:** Sit or lie comfortably. Gently pull the lower eyelid down with one finger, look upwards, and gently squeeze the eye drop container to release one drop into the pocket formed by the lower eyelid. You can sit in front of a mirror to do this if it helps.



**Step 4:** Gently press your finger on the inner corner of the eye after administering the drop for at least one minute.

**Step 5:** If you use drops in both eyes, repeat the steps for the other eye.

## Using multiple eye drops

If you use multiple drops, you will need to wait for a period of time before applying your other drops. This will be confirmed in the patient information leaflet of your medication.

## Contact lenses and the use of eye drops

If you wear contact lenses, it's usually recommended that you remove these prior to administering your eye drops and wait for 15 minutes after applying your drops before putting them back in. This will be confirmed in the patient information leaflet of your medication.

## Establish a routine

Your eye drops are usually required to be used at the same time each day. Establish a routine to help you remember to take your eye drops – this could be something as simple as putting your eye drops near your toothbrush so you put in your drops when you brush your teeth before bed.

Always read the patient information leaflet before use. This will provide you with further information on how to use your drops, any side effects and how to store your medication effectively.



# Will it affect my ability to drive?

**Being diagnosed with glaucoma doesn't necessarily mean you will have to give up driving, and only 12% of people with glaucoma lose their license.**

However, you must inform the DVLA about any eye condition that affects your sight or field of vision.

## **If you have glaucoma in one eye**

- You only need to tell the DVLA if you're a commercial (group two driver).
- If you have glaucoma in one eye and normal vision in the other, you don't need to let the DVLA know.

## **If you have glaucoma in both eyes**

- You must inform the DVLA as soon as you have been diagnosed and declaring it affects both of your eyes.

# Diet and exercise and living with Glaucoma



Reduce your caffeine intake, as too much caffeine can raise the pressure in your eyes.



Excessive alcohol intake can damage the optic nerve, so drink alcohol in moderation.



There is no evidence that smoking increases the chances of damage to the eyes and glaucoma, but older smokers have a higher risk of increasing the intra-ocular pressure in the eye.



Omega oil from fish or seeds are helpful for general eye health.



Exercise is great for general health, but be cautious to avoid certain activities that may affect the eye pressure, such as lifting heavy weights, playing wind instruments or wearing tight goggles for swimming.



Getting a good nights sleep is important for general health. To help reduce eye pressure, sleep on your back and prop your head up using a pillow, so it's supporting your head and your neck.



You are able to travel with glaucoma but always ensure you have your eye drops in your hand luggage in case you need them.



<https://www.dryeyeandme.co.uk/what-is-glaucoma/>