

East Sussex
Vision Support

Diabetic Retinopathy

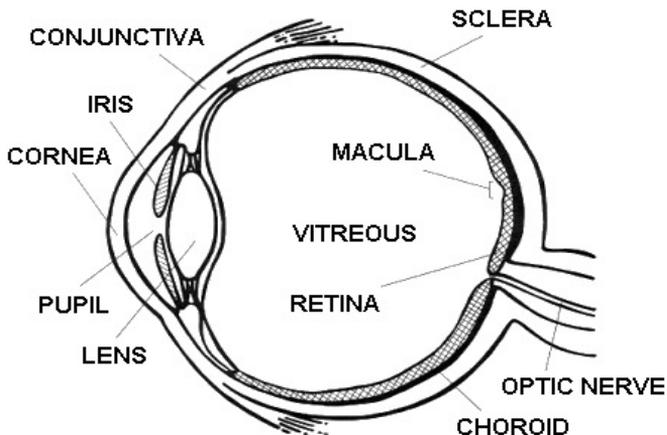


Supporting people who are
blind or partially sighted throughout
East Sussex, Brighton and Hove.



DIABETIC RETINOPATHY EXPLAINED

- Diabetic Retinopathy is the name given to the changes in the retina of the eye which can occur over time in people who have diabetes.
- However, having diabetes does not necessarily mean you will lose sight.
- Yearly eye checks are important for people with diabetes as early diagnosis of retinopathy may help in keeping problems to a minimum.
- Good control of your diabetes helps prevent diabetic retinopathy.



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MORE DETAIL

The retina covers the interior of the back of the eye and is made up of the light sensitive cells used for vision. The retina is fed by a network of tiny blood vessels and in diabetic retinopathy, the walls of these blood vessels become fragile and start to break, leaking blood around them. The amount of blood that leaks is very small and the symptoms may be floating spots in front of the eyes or areas of blurring, which sometimes clear up without treatment.

Eventually, the blood vessels may stop carrying blood permanently, and so the cells in the retina will die from lack of nourishment. When the old blood vessels stop working, new ones grow to take their place. These new blood vessels are even more leaky and are not able to nourish the retina and may grow into the inner part of the eye (the vitreous) and cause further sight loss.

Treatment

Treatment is most usually carried out with laser equipment which uses a beam of high intensity light, focused with extreme precision, to seal the haemorrhages on the retina and halt further deterioration.

Living with Diabetic Retinopathy

- Vision may be patchy and blurred and may change from day to day or even hour to hour.
- Avoid glare, light shining directly into the eyes or reflecting back off a shiny surface.

Living with diabetic retinopathy (Continued)

- Wear a hat with a brim in bright sun.
- Sunglasses may help.
- For close work try direct light from an adjustable fluorescent lamp.

For further information on diabetes contact:

Diabetes UK

Wells Lawrence House
126 Back Church Lane
London
E1 1FH

T: 020 7424 1001

W: diabetes.org.uk

For further information on lighting, equipment, or training available to you:

East Sussex Vision Support

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