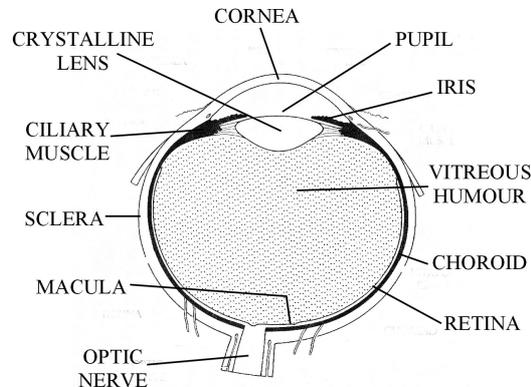


diabetes and the eye



Why is diabetes important?

Diabetes is the leading cause of blind registrations in the working population in the UK. It is also on the increase. There are two main types of diabetes type 1 which is usually acquired when we are young and has a strong hereditary element and type 2 which normally affects us in later life and is often as a result of our lifestyles.

Diabetes affects the eyes by damaging the blood vessels in the retina. It also increases the risk of glaucoma and early onset of cataracts.

How can I check my eyes?

In the East Riding we have a dedicated team of retinal screening specialists who go around to GPs' surgeries in mobile units and photograph the backs of the eyes of diabetes sufferers. This invaluable service is free on the NHS and saves the sight of many people each year as it enables diabetic eye damage to be picked up at an early stage when it is more readily treatable.

In conjunction with this all people with diabetes are entitled to free annual eye examinations at the optician of their choice. At this appointment we further check for cataract, glaucoma and any visual changes possibly associated with diabetic eye disease. Here at **eye deal opticians** we have a fundus camera to also photograph the retina in diabetic patients. This service is free to all with diabetes who have an eye examination with us.

What can I do to help your eyes?

There is a lot of evidence which suggests that keeping close control of your blood sugar has a long term protecting effect on the eyes – not only the eyes but also the vulnerable structures such as the kidneys and peripheral circulation.

Healthy diet, regular exercise, normal body mass index (keeping your weight under control) and crucially giving up smoking all help in the battle against damage from diabetes.

Is there any treatment for diabetic eye disease?

Yes. If there are blood vessels changing in the backs of your eyes which are likely to threaten your vision then lasers can be used to slow the progression of the damage and protect the vital macular area which is responsible for our clear vision such as reading and face recognition. Regular eye examinations and screening will detect this damage at an early more treatable stage.

There is a lot of ongoing research into the causes, prevention and treatment of diabetes and its complications. New treatments will emerge in the future.

Can I still drive?

Yes. As long as you still satisfy the DVLA driving requirements. This involves check on your vision level, visual fields (peripheral vision) and ability of the muscles to control your eyes. **eye deal opticians** is a registered DVLA screener for this.

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