



FEATURE ARTICLE FROM **Always Best Care**

What you Need to Know About Glaucoma

Vision is one of the senses that we rely heavily on each day. From reading directions or watching for danger to seeing the beauty of the world around us and the faces of ones we love, it's something many people take for granted. But as you age, there are several conditions that can cause vision problems, including glaucoma. January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month, and a wonderful time to brush up on what you need to know about this condition.

What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a condition in which the optic nerve in the eye becomes damaged from increased pressure or fluid buildup in the eye. Normally the eye maintains a balanced level of fluid and any excess is drained away. When this fluid doesn't drain properly, that is when problems occur and pressure builds and can damage the optic nerve if not caught early. According to the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#), glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness for people over age 60. However, glaucoma can affect people of all ages – not just seniors.

What are the Symptoms?

One of the tricky parts of dealing with glaucoma is that it can develop slowly and symptoms may not be noticeable at first. Vision loss starts with peripheral vision and gradually narrows the field of vision until central vision is all that remains. Eventually it can progress to complete blindness. Sometimes individuals may experience blurred vision, halos around lights, and a headache or eye pain if the pressure increases rapidly.

Can it be treated?

While there is no cure for glaucoma, there are treatments that can protect remaining vision and slow vision loss. Eye drops or medications may be prescribed to help reduce pressure and fluid in the eye to keep it from further

damaging the optic nerve. Surgery may also be used to help improve the drainage of fluid and open any blockages.

Early detection is key to reducing the impact of glaucoma. Beginning at age 65, individuals should have their eyes examined every year or every other year, especially if risk factors such as family history, diabetes, or other eye problems are present. All adults should have a complete eye exam by age 40 to identify vision problems and potential risk factors. If glaucoma is caught early, proactive measures can be taken to control pressure and fluid in the eye and protect the optic nerve.

Living with Glaucoma

There are an estimated three million Americans living with glaucoma, and about half may not even realize they have it. If caught early, blindness can be prevented, and steps can be taken to live more safely and comfortably with vision loss. Low vision devices such as magnifiers, enlarged print, or colored lenses can help. Reducing sodium intake and [spacing out fluids](#) throughout the day can help as well. It is important to take any medications or eye drops as prescribed to support glaucoma treatment.

An [in-home care](#) giver can provide assistance with daily activities affected by low vision or vision loss, and provide medication reminders. Seniors can continue to age in place and live as independently as possible with the proper level of support. To learn more about in-home care and available services, contact Always Best Care today at (855) 470-2273 to schedule a free consultation.