



EYE DISORDERS

Volume 3, Issue 12

March, 2010

Ginny Wirick, RN
Local 50 Health Advocate
7570 Caple Blvd.
Northwood, OH 43619
419-662-1272

GLAUCOMA



EYE FACTS

- Eyes are the most complex organs next to the brain
- Eyes have 2 million working parts
- Eyes can process 36,000 bits of info per hour
- Eyes contribute towards 85% of your total knowledge
- Eyes can instantly set in motion hundreds of muscles and organs in the body
- Eyes are your most precious sense... care for them properly

Glaucoma is the leading cause of **preventable** blindness in the United States.

Glaucoma is a disease of the major nerve of vision, the optic nerve. The optic nerve acts like an electric cable with over a million wires. It is responsible for carrying images from the eye to the brain. With glaucoma there is a dangerous buildup of internal eye pressure, due to a clog in the eye's drainage system, that damages the nerve and the transmission of visual information to the brain. Once damage to the optic nerve has occurred, it cannot be reversed.

There are two main types of glaucoma: acute and chronic. The acute strikes suddenly, inflicting cloudy vision, often with severe pain in and around the eyes. The chronic

type— which is most common— progresses slowly and painlessly, with symptoms that may appear every now and then. Gradual loss of peripheral vision, usually in both eyes is a sign of chronic glaucoma.

Risks for glaucoma increases if you are African-American; are 60 years of age or older; have a family history of glaucoma; nearsighted; have diabetes, heart disease or hypothyroidism; or, have been on long term corticosteroid use.

A variety of options are available to treat glaucoma. These include eye drops, laser procedures, and surgery. All are intended to decrease eye pressure and thereby, protect the optic nerve. In the United States, eye drops are usually the first choice for treatment. Also, a combination of medi-

cations and laser treatment can also safely control eye pressures. When laser does not work a filtering microsurgery to create a drainage hole may be recommended to relieve ocular pressure.

Regular eye checkups can help detect glaucoma in its early stages before irreversible damage occurs. It's best to have routine eye checkups every two years if you're between 18-60 years old, and every year if you're older than 60. Because African-Americans have a much higher risk of glaucoma, they should be screened every three to five years from age 20 to 29, every two to four years from age 30 to 40, and every one to two years thereafter. If you have one or more risk factors for glaucoma, talk to your doctor about scheduling more frequent eye exams.



EYE EXAMINATION

One aspect of our health that many take for granted is our eyesight. Just like a physical or dental checkup, annual visits to an eye care doctor are necessary to guarantee healthy and normal vision. Almost four fifths of all the sensory information our brains receive daily comes

from the eyes.

An annual visit allows your eye doctor to evaluate any changes and correct any difficulties you may have with your sight. Vision disorders increase with age and although you may not be having any trouble now the threat is there.

Eye examinations are a painless and informative method for assessing your eyes. The basic eye exam takes about 30-60 minutes depending on the number of tests the doctor may need to perform.



DENTAL/VISION COVERAGE ACTIVE MEMBER

- Maximum benefit payable is \$750.00 per family unit per calendar year.
- Claims exceeding \$750.00 may be submitted to supplemental account.