

Health Tips From the VNA

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month

What is glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a disease that results in loss of sight due to damage of the optic nerve. The optic nerve is vital to sight because it sends information from the eye to the brain; however, because this disease isn't painful, most people don't realize they have glaucoma until they have severe damage to the optic nerve. At first, peripheral vision is lost and gradually central vision diminishes. Such sight loss is slow, and the eyes take many years to deteriorate with this disease. In fact, most people have some level of permanent vision loss before they even realize it.

How widespread is glaucoma?

According to Prevent Blindness America, there are 2.2 million Americans over the age of 40 who have glaucoma. This disease is the second leading cause of adult blindness in the United States. The best way for you to take measures to reduce the risk of severe glaucoma is to regularly visit your eye doctor and discuss any changes or problems you may have noticed, consistently take part in a complete eye exam, including dilation, and be aware of the risk factors relating to glaucoma.

Are there different types of glaucoma?

There are two different types of glaucoma, open-angle glaucoma and closed-angle glaucoma. Open-angle glaucoma progresses slowly with few symptoms and accounts for 90 percent of all glaucoma cases in the United States. With closed-angle glaucoma, vision loss and symptoms occur more rapidly.

Who is at risk of developing glaucoma?

- individuals ages 55 and older
- those who are very nearsighted
- individuals with a family history of the disease
- those with high blood pressure
- people who have had eye surgery or an eye injury
- anyone who has taken steroids for an extended period of time
- individuals with diabetes

Arm yourself against glaucoma

Tell your doctor about any changes in your eyes, of any medications you are taking, and of any glaucoma risk factors you may have. Additionally, it is imperative to have regular, complete eye exams each year.

How can the VNA help you?

The VNA offers complimentary home safety inspections, which can be especially helpful to individuals with vision loss. A VNA nurse will inspect your house looking for safety measures such as proper railings and slip resistant rugs to be sure you are taking a pro-active approach to safety. For your complimentary home safety inspection, call the VNA today at 567.5551.

More Information

Contact Prevent Blindness America at www.preventblindnessamerica.com or All About Vision at www.allaboutvision.com for more information regarding glaucoma.

Call 772.567.5551
or visit us online at www.vnadc.com.