

## What can be done if the retinal screen detects any warning signs?

- You may need to be monitored more frequently by an ophthalmologist (eye specialist).
- They can do a number of tests on your eyes to decide what treatment will be most effective for you.

## How can I prevent problems with my eyes from developing?

- Keeping your blood sugar (glucose) levels well controlled reduces your risk of developing eye diseases or delays the onset.
- If your blood glucose levels are high, they should be reduced gradually – discuss this with your healthcare professional.
- Control your weight, your cholesterol levels and your blood pressure through diet and exercise.
- Have a regular appointment with your ophthalmologist at least once a year. It is much easier to stop eye disease from developing into something serious if it is treated in the early stages.



## Customer Care Line

Country	Customer Care Line	Operating Hours
Australia	1-800-801478	Mon-Fri 8.00-18.00

Leaflet produced by Abbott Diabetes Care, manufacturer of



Ask your healthcare professional how Optium Omega, Optium Xceed or FreeStyle Lite blood glucose meters may assist you, always read the label and use only as directed.

If you are a user of an ADC meter in Australia, call Customer Service on 1800 801 478, or register on line at [www.abbottdiabetescare.com.au](http://www.abbottdiabetescare.com.au) to activate your lifetime meter warranty.

**References:** 1. Joslin's Diabetes Mellitus, 14th Edition 2005, New York Ovid Technologies. 2. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases of the National Institutes of Health Bethesda, Md. NIDDK. 3. Kronenberg: Williams Textbook of Endocrinology 11th Edition 2008.

Please consult your healthcare professional before making any changes.

Abbott Diabetes Care, 666 Doncaster Road, Doncaster, Victoria 3108, Australia. [www.abbottdiabetescare.com.au](http://www.abbottdiabetescare.com.au)  
ABN 95 000 180 389 MSE080304104632 24203

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# Looking after your eyes



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## What's the problem?

Eye problems can develop when you have diabetes of any type, whether it is controlled with insulin, tablets or by diet and exercise alone. Symptoms can be detected during an examination by an ophthalmologist and the earlier they are detected, the more successfully they can be treated.

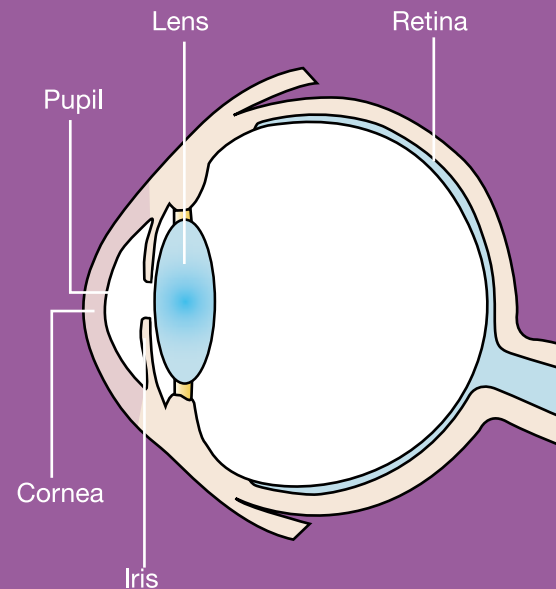
Diabetes affects the blood circulation in your retina (the back of your eye), which causes changes in the blood vessels. The changes occur slowly over many years therefore you probably won't be aware of any difference until the problem becomes acute and your vision is affected.

The eye condition most commonly associated with diabetes is called diabetic retinopathy. Diabetes is also associated with cataracts and glaucoma.

***Have your eyes examined by an Optometrist or Ophthalmologist at least once a year.***

## What happens in an eye examination?

- Your vision will be measured using a vision chart.
- Some drops will be put in your eyes to dilate (open up) your pupils. This may sting briefly at first. Dilating your pupils helps the ophthalmologist to see more of the inside of your eye.
- Your ophthalmologist will be looking for warning signs of developing eye disease.
- You should have your eyes photographed so that pictures can be compared each time your eyes are examined.



## What is diabetic retinopathy?

There are four stages to the condition. They develop as problems with the capillaries (tiny blood vessels) that nourish your retina gradually become more severe:

1. The capillaries in your retina weaken and may leak small drops of fluid or form tiny, balloon-like swellings.
2. Some capillaries may become blocked.
3. As some capillaries become blocked, areas of your retina don't get the oxygen they need.
4. New capillaries develop to bring oxygen to the damaged tissue. This can result in blurred vision.  
The new capillaries:
  - Grow on the surface of your retina and the clear fluid in the middle of your eye.
  - Are very small and fragile therefore can bleed easily, causing further damage to the retina.

Even if you don't think you have any problems with your eyes, you should always attend your appointments. Problems may be developing at the back of your eyes that you don't know about. Ultimately, if left untreated, diabetic retinopathy can cause severe damage or even blindness. The earlier it is detected, the easier it is to treat.

