

Diabetic Retinopathy

What is diabetic retinopathy?

- **Diabetic retinopathy** is when diabetes harms the blood vessels that are inside the eye.

What causes diabetic retinopathy?

- Diabetic retinopathy is caused by **diabetes**. Diabetes weakens the blood vessels all over the body. This includes the blood vessels in the eyes.

Some things that can make it worse are:

- Poor blood sugar control
- High cholesterol (fat in the blood)
- High blood pressure
- Smoking

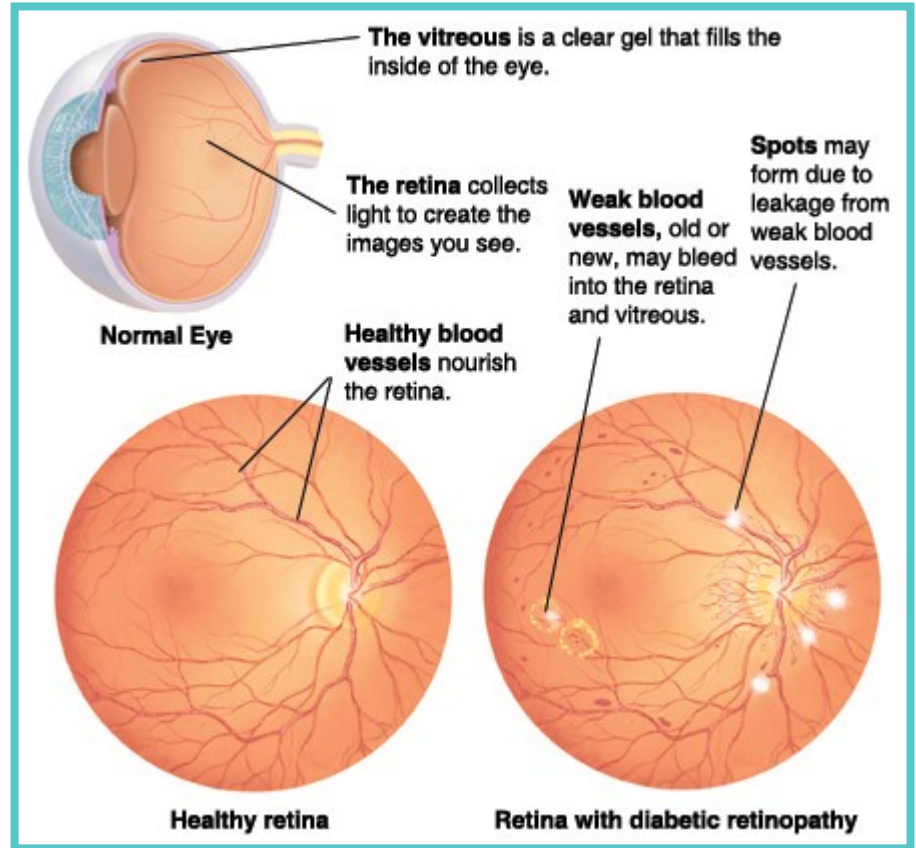


Image from Krames

What are the signs of diabetic retinopathy?

- You may have diabetic retinopathy without even knowing. **There are no early signs.**
- You may start to have blurry eyesight or see spots or floaters. You may also have trouble seeing at night. You may notice some loss of your eyesight.
- **If left untreated, diabetic retinopathy can cause blindness.**

Who is at risk?

- **Anyone who has diabetes (Type 1 and Type 2)** is at risk.

How can I lower my risk?

- If you have diabetes, it is recommended that you have an eye exam when you are diagnosed. **You should get eye exams yearly.** This will lower your risk of losing your eyesight.
- Keeping your diabetes under control will also help prevent harm to your eyes.

What tests will my doctor do to check my eyes for diabetic retinopathy?

- Your eye doctor will do a **dilated diabetic eye exam** to check for diabetic retinopathy. For this test, your eye doctor will put eyedrops in your eyes to dilate (widen) the pupils. This will help them see inside your eyes if there are signs of diabetic retinopathy.
- Your eye doctor may also do retinal scans to check for diabetic retinopathy.

What happens if I have diabetic retinopathy?

- If the exam shows that you have diabetic retinopathy, you may need to see an eye specialist.

What is the treatment for diabetic retinopathy?

- Getting yearly dilated eye exams is important so that your eye doctor can help catch problems early and prevent further vision loss.
- In some cases, your doctor may recommend laser treatment, injections, or surgery.

Talk to your CHN doctor if you have more questions!