

Glaucoma Awareness Month

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month



January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month, an important time to spread the word about this sight-stealing disease. Glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness. Everyone, from infants to seniors is vulnerable. Moreover, among African-American and Hispanic populations, glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness.

Over 3 million Americans, and nearly 70 million people worldwide, have glaucoma. Experts estimate that half of them don't know they have it. Combined with our aging population, we can see an epidemic of blindness looming if we don't raise awareness about the importance of regular eye examinations to preserve vision.

The most common type of glaucoma—primary open angle glaucoma—is hereditary; so if you do have glaucoma, don't keep it a secret. Let your family members know they are at increased risk.

Help Raise Awareness

Experts estimate that half of the people affected by glaucoma don't know they have it. Here are three ways you can help raise awareness:

1. Talk to friends and family about glaucoma. If you have glaucoma, don't keep it a secret. Let your family members know.
2. Refer a friend to our web site, www.glaucoma.org
3. Request to have [free educational booklets](#) sent to you or a friend

What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that gradually steal sight without warning. Although the most common forms primarily affect the middle-aged and the elderly, glaucoma can affect people of all ages.

Types of Glaucoma

There are two main types of glaucoma: primary open angle glaucoma (POAG), and angle closure glaucoma. These are marked by an increase of intraocular pressure (IOP), or pressure inside the eye. When optic nerve damage has occurred despite a normal IOP, this is called normal tension glaucoma.

Secondary glaucoma refers to any case in which another disease causes or contributes to increased eye pressure, resulting in optic nerve damage and vision loss.

[Read more about Types of Glaucoma](#)

Facts and Statistics

Glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness, and in the most common form, there are virtually no symptoms. Vision loss begins with peripheral or side vision, so if you have glaucoma, you may not notice anything until significant vision is lost.

The best way to protect your sight from glaucoma is to get a comprehensive eye examination. Then, if you have glaucoma, treatment can begin immediately.

Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness among African-Americans. And among Hispanics in older age groups, the risk of glaucoma is nearly as high as that for African-Americans. Also, siblings of persons diagnosed with glaucoma have a significantly increased risk of having glaucoma.

[Read more glaucoma facts and statistics](#)

Risk Factors

[Are you at risk for glaucoma?](#) Those at higher risk include people of African, Asian, and Hispanic descent, people over 60, and people with diabetes or hypertension. [Read more](#) about groups of people who are at higher risk than others. Regular eye exams are especially important for those at higher risk for glaucoma, and may help to prevent unnecessary vision loss.

Help Us Find a Cure

Glaucoma Research Foundation is a national non-profit organization funding innovative research to preserve vision and find a cure for glaucoma. Gifts of every size make a difference. [Donate today.](#)

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