

## HOW IS DIABETES EYE DISEASE MANAGED?

- Aim for better control of diabetes and high blood pressure.
- Reduce weight and eat less fatty foods
- Stop smoking
- Diabetes retinopathy requires LASER rays, and sometimes surgery.

## HOW TO PREVENT BLINDNESS CAUSED BY DIABETES

- Diabetic patients should have regular check up of every three (3) months.
- Early detection of complications of 'diabetes eye disease' is essential to reduce risk of blindness

Screening can be done by eye nurses, optometrists, eye specialist

*Diabetes can make you blind*



**Republic of Botswana**

Produced by

Prevention of Blindness Programme  
in conjunction with The Health Promotion  
and Education Division  
Private Bag 00269  
Gaborone Botswana

Design: Healthgraphics

# DIABETES AND THE EYE



**WHAT IS  
DIABETES EYE  
DISEASE?**

## DIABETES AND THE EYE

An image of an object is formed on the inner lining of the eye (retina) through the lens. The eye then sends messages along the optic nerve to the brain, and this makes it possible for us to see the picture of the object.

## WHAT IS DIABETES

Diabetes is a disease or condition that occurs when the body is unable to use certain foods, particularly carbohydrates (sugars and starches) because of insufficient substance called insulin which helps to transport sugars in the blood to the cells in the body where they are needed. Diabetes affects both children and adults.

## WHAT IS DIABETES EYE DISEASE

Diabetes eye disease is a disease of the eye that affects all parts of the eye and produces white patches at the back of the eye which if not treated will cause blindness or damage blood vessels inside the eye (diabetic retinopathy).

## CHANGING EYE SIGHT

Blurred eye sight occurs when the blood sugar is very high. The sugar enters the eye lens and causes focusing problem as the image formed inside the eye is no longer clear. The eye sight improves as the blood sugar returns to normal.

If the blood sugar has been high for too long, the eye lens becomes cloudy (cataract). The eye sight can be improved by a cataract operation. Damaged or leaking blood vessels inside the eye (diabetic retinopathy) is dangerous as it may lead to blindness.

## PERMANENT POOR EYE SIGHT

Blindness can occur due to the following:

- The blood vessels of the inner lining of the eye (retina) are irreversibly damaged
- The retina has peeled off
- The nerve supply to the eye (optic nerve) is damaged

## WHAT ACCELERATE PROGRESSION OF DIABETES EYE DISEASE?

- Poorly controlled diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Kidney damage
- High blood cholesterol
- Being over weight
- Smoking
- Pregnancy



Diabetic patients should have regular eye check ups to prevent diabetes eye disease.