

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a group of eye conditions that damage the optic nerve, the health of which is vital for good vision. This damage is often caused by an abnormally high pressure in your eye.

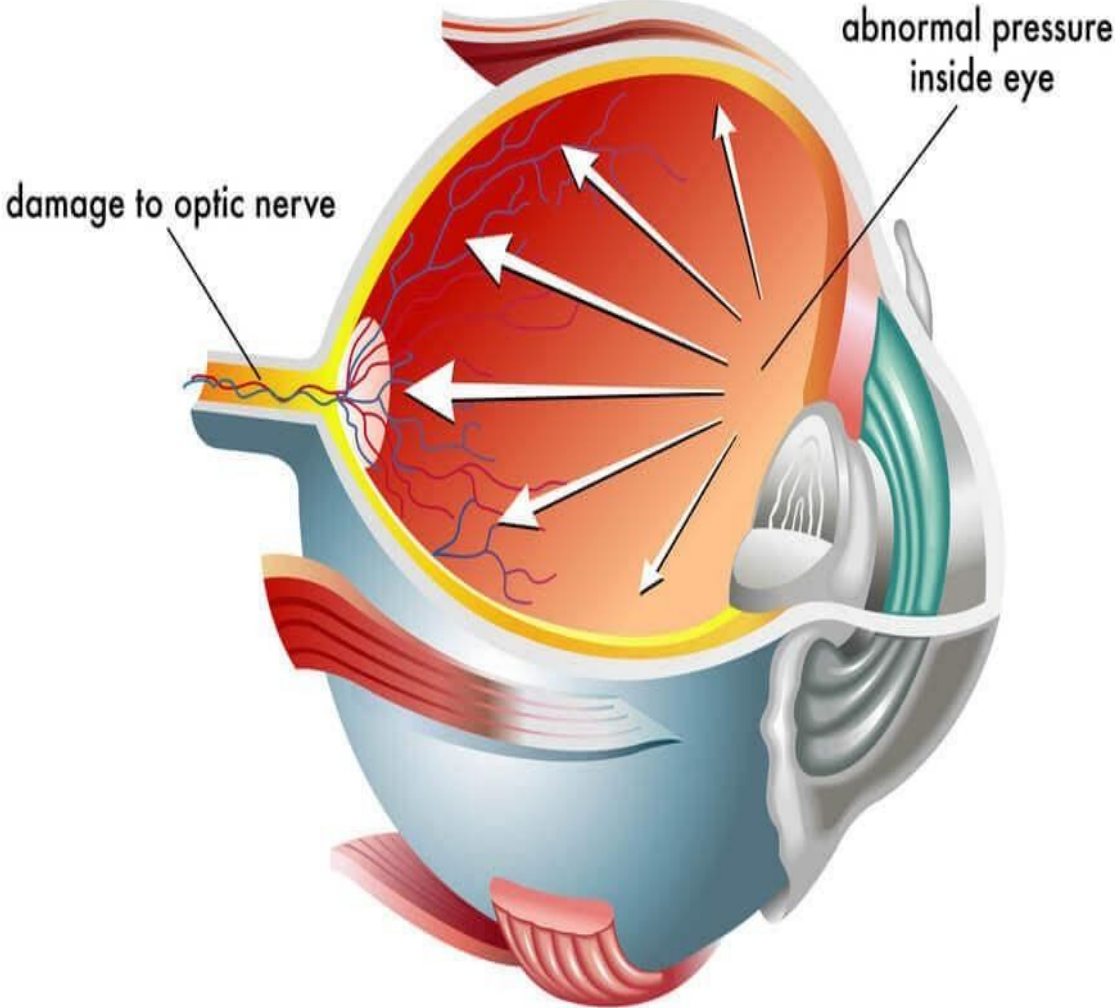
Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness for people over the age of 60. It can occur at any age but is more common in older adults.

Many forms of glaucoma have no warning signs. The effect is so gradual that you may not notice a change in vision until the condition is at an advanced stage.

Because vision loss due to glaucoma can't be recovered, it's important to have regular eye exams that include measurements of your eye pressure so a diagnosis can be made in its early stages and treated appropriately. If

glaucoma is recognized early, vision loss can be slowed or prevented. If you have the condition, you'll generally need treatment for the rest of your life.

GLAUCOMA



Symptoms

The signs and symptoms of glaucoma vary depending on the type and stage of your condition. For example:

Open-angle glaucoma

- Patchy blind spots in your side (peripheral) or central vision, frequently in both eyes

- Tunnel vision in the advanced stages

Acute angle-closure glaucoma

- Severe headache
- Eye pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Blurred vision
- Halos around lights
- Eye redness

Causes

Glaucoma is the result of damage to the optic nerve. As this nerve gradually deteriorates, blind spots develop in your visual field. For reasons that doctors don't fully understand, this nerve damage is usually related to increased pressure in the eye.

Elevated eye pressure is due to a buildup of a fluid (aqueous humor) that flows throughout

the inside of your eye. This internal fluid normally drains out through a tissue called the trabecular meshwork at the angle where the iris and cornea meet. When fluid is overproduced or the drainage system doesn't work properly, the fluid can't flow out at its normal rate and eye pressure increases.

Glaucoma tends to run in families. In some people, scientists have identified genes related to high eye pressure and optic nerve damage.

