

For more information about diabetic retinopathy,
visit the Healthy Vision 2010 Website at
www.healthyvision2010.org.

If You Have Diabetes, Get a Comprehensive Dilated Eye Exam

People with diabetes should have a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year to check for early signs of diabetic retinopathy, a leading cause of visual impairment. Timely treatment and appropriate followup care can reduce the risk of blindness by 90 percent, even for people with advanced diabetic retinopathy.



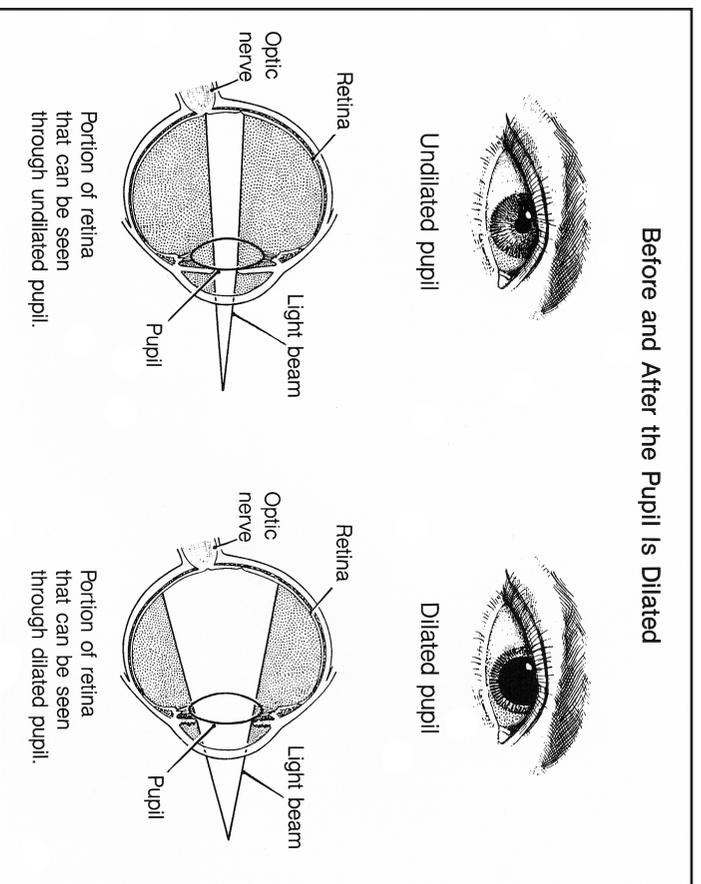
Why do people with diabetes need comprehensive dilated eye exams?

The early stages of diabetic retinopathy often



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have no warning signs. People with the disease can go years without ever knowing they have it. In fact, between 40 and 45 percent of people with diagnosed diabetes have some form of the disease. The longer you have diabetes, the more likely you are to develop diabetic retinopathy.

A comprehensive dilated eye exam allows your eye care professional to look for signs of eye disease by examining your retina, the light-sensitive tissue

at the back of your eyes. In people with diabetic retinopathy, leaking blood vessels can cause vision loss.

Can diabetic retinopathy be treated?

Yes. If diabetic retinopathy is diagnosed and treated early, additional vision loss can be avoided. However, vision already lost cannot be restored. Leaking blood vessels can be repaired and extra blood vessels can be removed.

How can you protect your vision?

The best protection is to get a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year.

A major study has shown that better control of blood pressure, cholesterol, and sugar levels slows the onset and progression of diabetic retinopathy. Ask your eye care professional if such a control program is right for you.