

Keep an **eye** on your **vision**



Dr Yeo Kim Teck, Ophthalmologist, Apple Eye Centre and Dr Tsou Pei-Fang, Medical Officer, Singapore National Eye Centre answer questions on diabetic retinopathy or diabetic eye disease.



Q. I am 45 years old and was diagnosed with diabetes only five months ago. Do I need to have my eyes checked?

A. All adult patients (adult onset diabetes or type 2 diabetes) need to get their eyes checked. It is possible that you may have had diabetes for many years without prior symptoms. It is therefore important that you get your eyes examined regardless of the duration of “known” diabetes.

In young people with diabetes (juvenile onset or type 1), it is not common to have diabetes affecting the eye (diabetic retinopathy) in the first three to five years. In such situations, the recommendation is that you have your eyes checked at least once after three to five years.

Q. My vision is good. I can see very far away and can also read well with my reading glasses. Do I still need an eye-check?

A. Having good vision does not mean that your eyes have not been affected by diabetic retinopathy. You can have serious potentially sight-threatening diabetic retinopathy and yet not have any symptoms and normal vision.

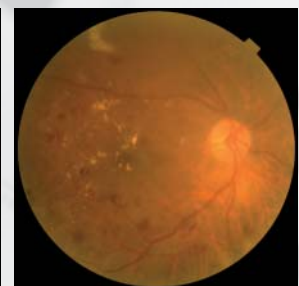
Q. My vision is blurred. Is it due only to diabetic retinopathy?

A. There are a number of conditions that can cause your vision to be blurred. These include:

- Diabetic retinopathy (Diabetic Eye Disease)
- Uncorrected shortsightedness, longsightedness or astigmatism
- Cataract
- Glaucoma
- Age-related macula degeneration or other retinal/macula conditions



This photograph of the retina of a patient with diabetes is normal. There are no signs of diabetic retinopathy or diabetic eye disease.



A retinal photograph showing bleeding spots (haemorrhage) and yellow fat-protein spots (hard exudates) This condition is known as diabetic retinopathy or diabetic maculopathy and was detected on routine eye examination.



Q. Where can I get my eyes checked?

A. You can get photographs of your retina taken at the Diabetic Society of Singapore (DSS) Diabetes Education & Care Centre or at the polyclinics.

You can also have a complete eye examination at both the public or private eye centres. Consult your primary-care doctor who will be able to arrange this for you.

Q. How frequently do I need to get my eyes checked after my first visit?

A. It is recommended that you get your eyes checked at least once a year. If you are found to have diabetic retinopathy, you may need more frequent eye checks depending on the state of your eye condition.

Resources: www.moh.com.sg and www.aao.com