



## Mythbusters: Diabetic retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy is a complication of diabetes. It is caused by damage to the small blood vessels in the retina, which is at the back of the eye.

Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of avoidable vision loss and blindness in working-age Australians.

**There are many misconceptions about diabetic retinopathy. Let's bust some myths and get to the facts.**

**MYTH: Diabetic retinopathy only affects people whose diabetes is not well managed.**

**STATUS: BUSTED**

Most people with diabetes will develop some form of diabetic retinopathy during their lifetime, regardless of how well they manage their condition. However, the severity and progression of diabetic retinopathy are closely linked to how well diabetes is managed.

**MYTH: Diabetic retinopathy always causes noticeable symptoms.**

**STATUS: BUSTED**

Diabetic retinopathy can advance considerably without you noticing any changes to your vision, particularly when your other eye is still functioning normally. Because of this, symptoms alone are not a dependable way to detect the condition. Routine eye examinations are crucial for identifying diabetic retinopathy in its early stages, before any vision changes occur.

**MYTH: There is no effective treatment for diabetic retinopathy.**

**STATUS: BUSTED**

In some cases, your eye health professional may recommend treatment for diabetic retinopathy. Treatment options can include laser therapy, intravitreal (eye) injections, and/or surgery.

However, the most important step in slowing the progression of diabetic retinopathy is effective management of your diabetes.

**MYTH: Diabetic retinopathy always leads to blindness.**

**STATUS: BUSTED**

Early detection, regular monitoring, and treatment can help reduce the risk of vision loss or blindness. Regular eye examinations and managing your diabetes are key to preventing additional complications from developing, such as diabetic macular oedema.

**MYTH: Diabetic retinopathy only affects older adults.**

**STATUS: BUSTED**

Diabetic retinopathy can affect anyone living with diabetes, including children and young adults. The longer you have been diagnosed with diabetes, the higher your risk of developing diabetic retinopathy; age alone is not a protective factor.

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## Need more information?

Contact us today.

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