

Diabetes-related eye conditions and your vision

EYE CONNECT



Macular
Disease
Foundation
AUSTRALIA



In the early stages, diabetes-related eye conditions may cause little to no changes to your vision. More serious eye complications can develop as the condition progresses, which can affect your vision.

People living with diabetes may experience fluctuating vision from day to day. These changes usually settle once blood glucose levels are stable. If you're unsure about any vision changes, contact your eye care professional.

Key points to remember

- Diabetic retinopathy and diabetic macular oedema are complications of diabetes that can threaten your sight if not managed well
- Vision loss can often be prevented with early detection and good diabetes management
- If you notice any changes in your vision, contact your eye health professional straight away
- Regular eye checks are important to detect and manage changes early

Vision changes: what's normal and what's not

Early stages of diabetic retinopathy and diabetic macular oedema may have no symptoms. You may not notice any changes in your vision, even if there is damage at the back of your eye.

Possible symptoms to watch for:

- Blurry, distorted, or dim vision
- Wavy or patchy vision
- Frequent changes in your glasses or contact lens prescription
- Sudden onset of haze, shadows, or 'floaters' (moving spots or cobwebs in your vision)
- Flashes of light, especially in your side vision
- Colours appearing faded or washed out
- Dark spots or gaps in your vision

Red flags: when to seek urgent review

If you notice any of the following, contact your eye care professional as soon as possible:

- Sudden loss or significant change in vision
- New or worsening floaters or flashes of light
- Sudden appearance of dark patches, shadows, or blank spots in your vision
- Any rapid change in your ability to see clearly

Diabetes-related eye conditions and your vision

Ongoing care: protecting your vision

- **Regular eye checks:** Have your eyes examined at least every 12 months, or as often as your eye health professional recommends – even if your vision seems fine
- **Manage your diabetes:** Aim to keep your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol within target ranges
- **Healthy habits:** Eat well, stay active, and avoid smoking
- **Treatment:** Early treatment can help save sight. You'll find more information on treatments in the *Planning for your future* factsheet

At home: monitoring your vision

- Use the Amsler grid provided in your welcome pack to check for changes in your central vision, which could be a sign of diabetic macular oedema*
- If you notice any new symptoms or changes, do not wait for your next scheduled appointment—seek advice promptly

Support and more information

- If you're concerned about changes to your vision, contact your **eye care professional**, i.e. your optometrist or ophthalmologist
- If you are concerned about managing your blood glucose levels, contact your **diabetes care team**: i.e. your GP, endocrinologist, diabetes educator, and dietitian
- **Sign up to KeepSight**, the national diabetes eye screening reminder program: www.keepersight.org.au

Remember: Early detection and prompt action are the best ways to protect your sight. Even if your vision is good, regular checks and attention to any changes are essential.

If you do find you're experiencing vision loss, even after seeing your eye care professional, support is out there. Contact our friendly Helpline team. We're always here to support you, whatever stage of the journey you're on.

*Contact us on 1800 111 709 or email eyeconnect@mdfoundation.com.au for an Amsler grid to be sent out for free.

Need more information?

Contact us today.

T 1800 111 709 (free call)

E info@mdfoundation.com.au

W www.mdfoundation.com.au

Disclaimer: Information in this publication is considered by Macular Disease Foundation Australia to be accurate at the time of publication. While every care has been taken in its preparation, medical advice should always be sought from a doctor and individual advice about your eye health should be sought from your eye health professional. MDFA cannot be liable for any error or omission in this publication or for damages arising from it, and makes no warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied in relation to this publication.