



Are you at risk for glaucoma?

By: Angela Berghoff, Independent Doctor of Optometry
Kelli Brooks, ABO Certified Optician

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that gradually steal sight without warning. In the early stages, there may be no symptoms. Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness.

Are you at risk for glaucoma? Everyone is at risk for glaucoma from babies to senior citizens. However, certain groups are at a higher risk than others. Those at high risk should schedule a complete eye exam every one to two years.

Groups at high risk:

- a. **African-Americans:** Glaucoma is six to eight times more common in African-Americans than in Caucasians. African-Americans are also susceptible at a younger age.
- b. **People over 60:** You are six times more likely to get glaucoma if you are over 60 years old.
- c. **Asians:** Those of Asian descent appear to be more at risk for angle closure glaucoma
- d. **Family Members with Glaucoma:** Primary open angle glaucoma, the most common type of the disease, is hereditary. Family history increases risk of glaucoma four to nine times.
- e. **Steroid Users:** Evidence links steroid (oral, inhaled and topical) use to glaucoma.
- f. **Eye Injury:** Injury may cause secondary open angle glaucoma. This type of glaucoma may occur immediately after the injury but usually presents years later. Blunt injuries or injuries that penetrate the eye may damage the eye's drainage system, leading to traumatic glaucoma. The most common cause is sports-related injuries such as in baseball or boxing.
- g. **Other Risk Factors:**
 - i. High myopia (nearsightedness)
 - ii. Diabetes
 - iii. Hypertension

There is no cure for glaucoma. However, medication or surgery can slow or prevent further vision loss. Early detection is VITAL to stopping the progress of the disease.

Your eyesight is a precious gift, lets work together to keep it that way.

--- Dr. Berghoff and Kelli Brooks' practice, StylEyes, is located at the St.Vincent Physician Network office at 10801 North Michigan Road in Zionsville. To make an appointment, please call 317.344.1266 or visit www.styleyoureyes.com.