

Overview of Diabetic Macular Edema (DME)

Have you been diagnosed with DME? If so, don't wait! Take action now to help keep your eyes as healthy as possible. DME is a serious eye condition that affects many people with diabetes. DME can cause vision problems and even blindness.

It All Starts With Diabetes

Diabetes is caused when your pancreas has trouble making or can no longer make the hormone insulin. Or when the pancreas produces insulin and releases it into your bloodstream, the cells in your body "push it away" (this is called insulin resistance). It's a problem if insulin cannot be used by your body because it converts sugar, starches, and other foods into the energy you need for everyday life.

If your pancreas does not produce insulin or your cells don't get the signal to use it, the sugar in your blood (called glucose) can build up—causing damage to different parts of your body, including your eyes.

In the United States, diabetes affects more than 29 million people. Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness among adults between the ages of 20 and 74. Between 2005 and 2008, 28% of patients 40 years of age or older had diabetic eye disease, which can lead to a loss of vision.

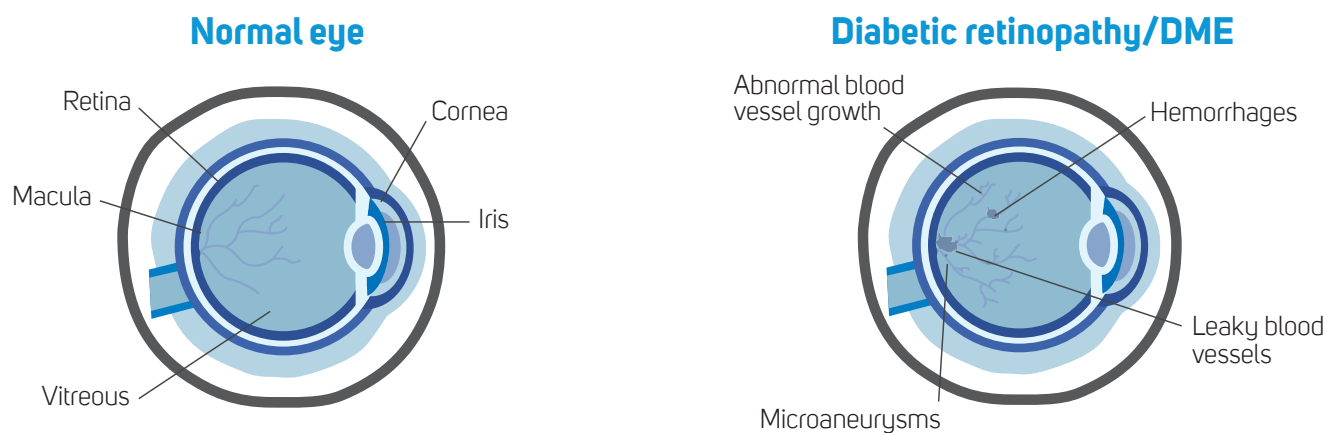
People with diabetes are more likely to get certain eye conditions than people without diabetes. These include high pressure in the eye (glaucoma), cloudy lens (cataract), and problems with the light-sensitive tissue in the eye (the retina) that is responsible for vision.



If you have diabetes, you should get a comprehensive dilated eye exam from an eye doctor at least once a year.

➔ The Connection Between Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) and Diabetic Macular Edema (DME)

Diabetic retinopathy is caused by changes in the blood vessels of the retina, which is the light-sensitive tissue in the back of the eye. As the disease progresses, blood vessels can become damaged and prevent parts of the retina from receiving blood and nutrients. Blood vessels can also swell and leak fluid into the macula, the highly sensitive area of the retina responsible for sharp, central vision. This can lead to DME.



Vision loss or blindness can happen as the macula swells, resulting in fluid leaking into the retina. DME can start even before you notice any symptoms. Symptoms of DME may include:



Dark spots or "floaters" in your vision



Blurred vision



Straight lines that look wavy



Washed-out colors

Early diagnosis and treatment are important. If not treated, DME can cause vision problems and even vision loss.

Learn more at DiabetesSightRisk.com.

For additional resources,
contact your case manager.



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