Diabetic Retinopathy: Controlling Your Risk Factors

Diabetic retinopathy occurs when diabetes harms blood vessels in the rear of the eye. This can lead to vision loss. Help reduce your risk of vision loss by taking care of your health. Managing your diabetes and other health problems can make diabetic retinopathy less likely.

Manage Your Diabetes
You can help protect your vision. To do this, keep your blood sugar level in a healthy range. Check your blood sugar often. Follow your diabetes management plan. Work closely with your health care providers. This includes your endocrinologist (diabetes doctor). He or she can help if you are having trouble keeping your blood sugar in range.

Control Your Risk Factors
There are other factors that damage blood vessels. These can make diabetic retinopathy worse. These factors include:

- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- High cholesterol

Work with your health care team to control these problems. This can help lower your risk. A diabetes educator can help you control blood pressure and high cholesterol. He or she can also talk to you about stop-smoking programs.

To Learn More
The resources below can help you learn more.

- American Diabetes Association
  800-342-2383 www.diabetes.org
- Lighthouse International
  800-829-0500 www.lighthouse.org
- National Eye Institute
  301-496-5248 www.nei.nih.gov
- Hormone Health Network
  800-467-6663 www.hormone.org

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