

Diabetic Care: Focusing on Eye Exams

As a person with diabetes, you understand the importance of maintaining your overall health. One way to do that is with an annual eye exam.

What is a diabetic eye exam? This exam focuses on detecting eye diseases caused by diabetes. It is like a regular eye exam but also focuses specifically on the retina and blood vessels. A diabetic eye exam can detect various eye conditions, including retinopathy.

What Is Diabetic Retinopathy?

Occurs when diabetes damages the tiny blood vessels inside the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye.

Who Is at Risk?

All people with diabetes—both type 1 and 2—are at risk.

No Early Symptoms

Over time, diabetic retinopathy can get worse and cause vision loss or blindness.

95%

Reduced Risk of Vision Loss

Early detection, timely treatment, and appropriate follow-up can reduce the risk of severe vision loss by 95 percent.



What can I expect at an eye exam? An eye exam is not painful and can have four parts:

- **Visual acuity testing:** Checks overall vision using an eye chart.
- **Tonometry:** Measures the pressure in your eye with a puff of air.
- **Retinal imaging:** Scan of the back of the eye.
- **Dilated eye exam:** Eye drops are used to enlarge your pupils.



How do I schedule a diabetic eye exam? Talk to your PCP about appropriate testing and the best way to book an appointment. Some PCP's can perform an eye exam right in their office. Search for an in-network eye care provider at healthnewengland.org/medicare/provider. Click the blue "Advanced Search" button, then select "Ophthalmology" or "Optometry" from the "Specialty" dropdown. You may also call Health New England Medicare Advantage Member Services for help at (877) 443-3314 (TTY: 711), 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday (Oct. 1 – Mar. 31: 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., seven days a week).

Sources: <https://www.optometrists.org/general-practice-optometry/guide-to-eye-conditions/guide-to-diabetes-and-the-eyes/what-is-a-diabetic-eye-exam/>; https://diabetes.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/EyeHealth_Resource_Annual-Exam_rev-1.pdf



LEARN MORE ABOUT WAYS TO MANAGE YOUR DIABETES —

We've created a webpage full of additional educational tips, information and resources just for Health New England members!

Scan the QR code or visit:

healthnewengland.org/healthy-conversations/diabetes-awareness



Health New England
Where you matter.

Diabetes Awareness & WebMD ONE®

How do I manage my diabetes? Good lifestyle choices and working with your doctor can help you stay as healthy as possible!



✓ Healthy Diet



✓ Get More Exercise



✓ Build Healthy Habits



✓ Visit Your Doctor Regularly



Try WebMD ONE: webmdhealth.com/hne

How WebMD ONE Can Help. Use the Healthy Directions WebMD ONE portal to track progress and stay educated about diabetic care:

- **Health Tracker:** Log your A1c, glucose, cholesterol, physical activity, diet and stress all in one place.
- **Daily Habits:** Take control of your well-being with 4-8 week goal-setting programs that focus on balancing your diet, diabetes, exercise, high blood pressure, emotional health and more.
- **Recipes:** Make it easy to meet your nutritional needs.
- **Content Hub:** Watch videos and read articles about the latest medical research and advice.
- **Personal Health Record:** Track medications, appointments, tests and more.
- Mental health podcasts.
- Access to monthly, live well-being webinars.
- A symptom checker.
- A search tool for information about specific medical topics and general well-being tips.
- AND MORE!

SCAN THE QR CODE

*To visit WebMD ONE
& learn more!*



EASY ACCESS ON YOUR SMARTPHONE—

with the Wellness At Your Side app (connection code: [healthnewengland](http://healthnewengland.org))

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