

Patient Education

As with most diseases, patient education, a lifelong learning process, should be the main focus for patients with glaucoma. Unfortunately, there is little factual knowledge as to how to prevent glaucoma. Nevertheless, in the early stages, if detected by the glaucoma specialist, treatment can prevent further damage over a lifetime in most of cases. In the past ten to fifteen years, largely as a result of newer therapeutic agents with minimal side effects, patient compliance has improved.

The key word is "early detection." In glaucoma, a visual field that has been lost is permanent and cannot be resorted. Not only that, once optic disc is damaged, the optic nerve becomes even more sensitive to even borderline IOP and IOP fluctuation. Repetitive reinforcement of the treatment plan at each office visit should include review of medication, proper administration and the following:

Managing glaucoma

- Use all medication regularly as prescribed by your ophthalmologist.
- Ensure that all follow-up appointments are kept.
- Make sure that you are clear about what type of glaucoma you have.
- Let your family know so that they can go and be screened for the disease.
- If you need to start any new tablets for other conditions, make sure your doctor is aware that you are using eye drops and what they are.
- Always include your eye drops if you are asked about the medications that you take regularly.
- Have regular examination of the eye pressure check, visual field examination and optic nerve examination as advised by your Ophthalmologist

These protocols are especially applicable to geriatric patients who are often forgetful and non compliant. The role of caregivers, family and others is equally important at times.

Activity

If picked up early enough, the vision should remain good and there should be no restrictions in activity. There are no definite guidelines regarding visual standards for driving in people with glaucoma but they are advised to Careful while driving. People who have filed defect are at higher risk of accidents. They will also require regular visual fields testing to ensure that they remain fit to drive. After surgery there may be limitations on activities for the short term duration.

Possible deterioration

Glaucoma, if not treated appropriately or picked up early enough, may lead to blindness.