

Are You At Risk For Glaucoma?

(NAPSA)—Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness in the U.S. But, with early diagnosis and treatment, most people can retain their vision for life.

What is glaucoma?

In a healthy eye, fluid is constantly being made and drained through a small drainage canal. When something blocks or prevents this natural drainage, the pressure inside the eye goes up. Glaucoma is often caused by increased pressure that can develop when the fluids in the eye are not draining properly. This condition eventually damages the nerve that connects the eye to the brain and leads to loss of vision.

Am I at risk?

While the causes for glaucoma are not completely known, we do know that risk factors include family history, race and older age. African-Americans, Hispanics and people with diabetes are also at higher risk of getting the disease.

What are the symptoms?

Sometimes, the condition may come on suddenly; most cases progress so slowly there are often no warning signs before damage inside the eye has already occurred. In most cases, a person's side vision (peripheral vision) is affected.

How is glaucoma treated?

Glaucoma can be treated with any of the following:

- Eye drops that lower eye pressure
- Laser therapy that allows for better drainage of fluids inside the eye
- Eye surgery to create a new drainage canal.

If untreated, glaucoma does lead to total blindness. Glaucoma can be detected with a medical eye exam. Ophthalmologists (medical eye doctors) can measure the pres-



Detecting Glaucoma early can save your sight!

sure inside the eye with a quick and painless office test.

EyeCare America offers medical eye services and free information through its national Glaucoma EyeCare Program. This program offers glaucoma eye screenings and care for those at increased risk of glaucoma. Uninsured patients receive the care at no charge.

The Glaucoma EyeCare Program is designed for people who:

- Are US citizens or legal residents
- Have not had an eye exam in 12 months or more
- Are at increased risk for glaucoma (family history, race, age).

People may call the toll-free help line at 1-800-391-EYES (3937) anytime to see if they qualify for a glaucoma eye exam or to request free eye care information.

EyeCare America's Glaucoma EyeCare Program is co-sponsored by Pfizer Ophthalmics.

Glaucoma doesn't have to interfere with leading a happy, sighted and fulfilling life.

Regular eye checkups can help save your sight and for some people they don't cost a thing.