

# Health Bulletin



## Glaucoma Can Be Prevented Or Delayed

(NAPSA)—A ten year study recently showed glaucoma, the leading cause of blindness in the U.S., can be prevented or delayed.

A study by the National Eye Institute (NEI) found pressure-lowering eye drops reduced patients' development of glaucoma by fifty percent.

"The study showed that treating elevated eye pressure delays or prevents the onset of glaucoma in some people," says Paul A. Sieving, M.D., Ph.D., director of NEI. "If you are at risk of glaucoma (all people over age 60 and African Americans and Hispanics over age 40), see your eye care professional to receive a comprehensive eye exam and to see if eye drops might help."

Eye screening is strongly supported by the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus, a nonprofit group instrumental in getting Congress to cover preventative glaucoma screenings under Medicare.

"Testing is quick and painless," says Bud Grant, Foundation president. "Once identified, glaucoma can be effectively treated."

Glaucoma occurs when the optic nerve is damaged—usually by increased pressure within the eye, a condition known as ocular hypertension. Damage to the optic nerve causes loss of peripheral



**A study found pressure-lowering eye drops can delay or prevent the onset of glaucoma.**

vision and as the glaucoma worsens, the field of vision narrows and blindness usually results.

It's estimated between three and six million Americans—including between four and seven percent of the population above age 40—have elevated eye pressure. The NEI study is the first scientific confirmation that treating elevated eye pressure before glaucoma develops can delay the onset of the disease.

Doctors say the study reconfirms the assertion that all people at risk should receive annual comprehensive eye exams.

For more information, visit [www.glaucomacongress.org](http://www.glaucomacongress.org) or call 1-877-611-4232.