

## Glaucoma

Glaucoma is an eye disease in which the passages that allow fluid in the eye to drain become clogged or blocked. This results in the amount of fluid in the eye building up and causing increased pressure inside the eye. This increased pressure damages the optic nerve which transmits visual information to the brain. Damage to the optic nerve results in loss of vision.

Unfortunately, the cause of glaucoma is not known and it currently cannot be prevented. If detected in the early stages of the disease, the pressures can be controlled to prevent further vision loss. Glaucoma can affect people of all ages, however, some patients are at higher risk of developing glaucoma:

- Patients over the age of 40
- Patients with severe nearsightedness
- Patients who have diabetes
- Patients who are African American
- Patients who have a family history of glaucoma

Glaucoma is most often managed with eye drops. If eye drops are ineffective in managing your pressures, then surgery may be necessary. Regular eye exams are an important way of detecting glaucoma in its earliest stages. In your annual eye exam, your family eye doctor will test the pressures of your eye, observe the optic nerve for signs of damage and perform a visual field test that checks your peripheral vision. Early detection and management enables the majority of patients to continue living and seeing the same way they always have.