



FOR RELEASE: Immediate

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- + Approximately 1,121,495 people in Georgia, or 14.2% of the adult population, have diabetes.
- + 2,599,000 people in Georgia, 36.1% of the adult population, have prediabetes
- + People with diabetes are at a significantly higher risk of developing vision problems.
- + If left undiagnosed and untreated, the eye condition diabetic retinopathy may lead to blindness.

More Than a Million in Georgia at Risk of Blindness Caused by Diabetes

American Diabetes Month a Smart Time to Learn That Early Detection and Treatment May Limit Potential for Vision Loss

ATLANTA (November, 2021) – More than 1,121,495 people in Georgia have been diagnosed with diabetes meaning they are at an increased risk of developing diabetic retinopathy that may lead to blindness, according to experts with the Georgia Optometric Association.

“Many eye problems don’t cause symptoms until they are in an advanced stage, which is why we recommend that people with diabetes in particular have an eye examination by a doctor of optometry at least once a year,” said Dr. Darrell Sorah, president of the Georgia Optometric Association. “When the pupils are dilated, an eye doctor is able to examine the retina for signs of diabetic eye disease and work with the patient to prescribe a management strategy involving lifestyle changes, more frequent observation and testing that we can then coordinate with their managing physician or other specialists to help preserve an individual’s sight.”

Diabetic retinopathy is a condition that causes progressive damage to the retina. Damage to the tiny blood vessels that nourish the retina causes swelling of retinal tissue and clouding of vision. If left untreated, diabetic retinopathy may lead to blindness.

Since early warning signs of diabetic eye and vision disorders are often subtle or undetected, the Georgia Optometric Association recommends that high-risk individuals look for initial signs and contact a doctor of optometry for an eye exam if any of the following symptoms are present:

- Sudden blurred or double vision
- Trouble reading or focusing on near-work
- Eye pain or pressure
- A noticeable aura or dark ring around lights or illuminated objects
- Visible dark spots in vision or images of flashing lights

In addition to having a yearly, comprehensive eye exam, the Georgia Optometric Association offers the following tips to help prevent or slow the development of diabetic eye disease:

- Take prescribed medication as directed
- Keep glycohemoglobin test results ("A1c" or average blood sugar level) consistently under 7 percent

SYMPTOMS OF DIABETES-RELATED RETINOPATHY INCLUDE:



Sudden increase in eye floaters (spots and/or dark cobweb-like strands)



Blurred vision



Sudden loss of vision in one eye



Halos around lights



Flashing lights



Poor night and color vision



Bringing Americans to Eye Care

To learn more, visit
www.preventblindness.org/diabetes.
#VisionandDiabetes

Find a doctor of optometry near you by using the ZIP code locator at www.GOAeyes.com. #BeVisionSmart

- Stick to a healthy diet that includes Omega 3s, fresh fruits and vegetables
- Exercise regularly
- Control high blood pressure
- Avoid alcohol and smoking

For more information about the Georgia Optometric Association, or to find a local doctor of optometry near you, please visit www.GOAeyes.com.

The Georgia Optometric Association is a statewide professional organization representing over 700 doctors of optometry located in communities throughout the state of Georgia. Founded in 1904, the GOA and its members work to provide the public with quality vision and eye care services. For more information visit www.GOAeyes.com, [www.Facebook.com/GeorgiaOptometricAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaOptometricAssociation) or follow us on Twitter @GOA_eyes.

Note: bullet point data source: <http://main.diabetes.org/dorg/PDFs/Advocacy/burden-of-diabetes/georgia.pdf>