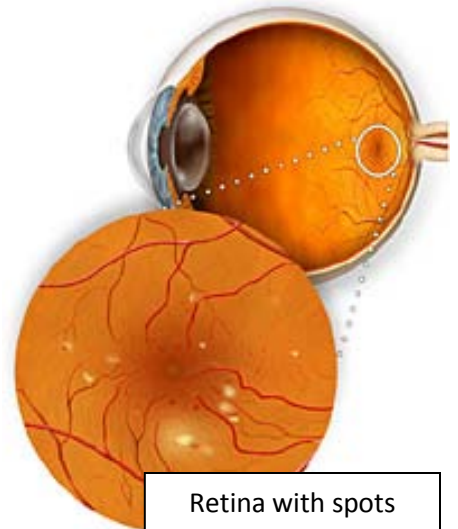


## DIABETIC RETINOPATHY



Dr. Perry Arndt

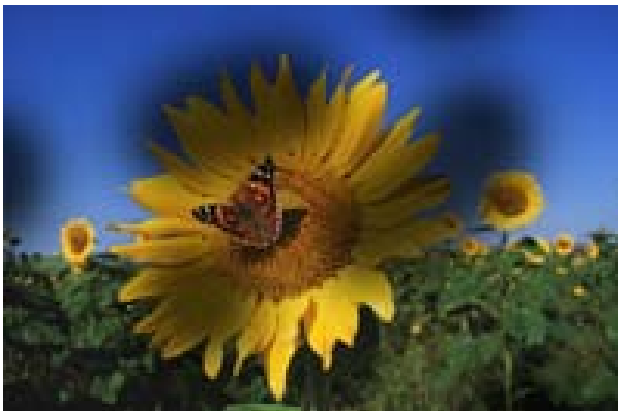
If you have diabetes, you probably know that your body can't use or store sugar properly. When your blood sugar gets too high, it can damage the blood vessels in your eyes. This damage may lead to diabetic retinopathy. Diabetic retinopathy is the result of damage to the tiny blood vessels that nourish the retina. They leak blood and other fluids that cause swelling of retinal tissue and clouding of vision. The condition usually affects both eyes. The longer a person has diabetes, the more likely they will develop diabetic retinopathy. If left untreated, diabetic retinopathy can cause blindness.



### Symptoms of Diabetic Retinopathy

- Seeing spots or floaters in your field of vision
- Blurred vision
- Having a dark or empty spot in the center of your vision
- Difficulty seeing well at night

In patients with diabetes, prolonged periods of high blood sugar can lead to the accumulation of fluid in the lens inside the eye that controls eye focusing. This



changes the curvature of the lens and results in the development of symptoms of blurred vision. The blurring of distance vision as a result of lens swelling will subside once the blood sugar levels are brought under control. Better control of blood sugar levels in patients with diabetes also slows the onset and progression of diabetic retinopathy. In the late stages of diabetic retinopathy you may have blind spots and/or floaters. Treatment of diabetic

retinopathy varies depending on the extent of the disease. It may require laser surgery to seal leaking blood vessels or to discourage new leaky blood vessels from forming. Injections of medications into the eye may be needed to decrease inflammation or stop the formation of new blood vessels. In more advanced cases, a surgical procedure to remove and replace the gel-like fluid in the back of the eye, called the vitreous, may be needed. A retinal detachment, defined as a separation of the light-receiving lining in the back of the eye, resulting from diabetic retinopathy, may also require surgical repair.

Dr. Perry Arndt is an optometrist at HealthView Eye Care Center-Medford. For more information on eye examinations, you can contact him at (715)748-2020 or 866-748-2020.

\*Information provided by: All About Vision, the American Optometric Association and National Eye Institute\*