

'GLAUCOMA' the sneak thief of sight.



Dr. Jeff Bourgerie

What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is an eye disease that damages the optic nerve, and is a leading cause of blindness in the world today. There are over three million people with glaucoma in the United States today and over 1 million do not even know it. There are over 80,000 people that go blind from glaucoma every year.

People at risk for glaucoma include:

- everyone over age 60,
- African Americans,
- people with primary relatives with glaucoma,
- persons with high myopia, high hyperopia, history of eye trauma, and diabetes.

Blindness from glaucoma is insidious. In most cases, Glaucoma produces no pain, and the loss of vision occurs slowly from peripheral to central. The central reading vision is not affected until the end thus most people do not realize it until they have lost a substantial amount of their peripheral vision.

How do you know if you have glaucoma?

During a comprehensive **dilated eye exam**, an eye care professional can see inside the eye to detect signs of glaucoma, such as subtle changes to the optic nerve, before any symptoms appear. This allows the eye care professional to determine if you have glaucoma or are at risk for it, to monitor your condition, to treat glaucoma as early as possible, and to look for other vision problems. Once symptoms appear, it may be too late to prevent vision loss and the progression to blindness.

Can you cure Glaucoma?

We do not have a cure for glaucoma at this time. Once the vision is lost, we cannot bring it back. However we do have excellent treatments today that can stop both early and late visual field loss. But as with all health concerns, early detection is the key for treatment, and at this time only a comprehensive dilated eye exam and evaluation of the optic nerve by an eye care professional can detect glaucoma.

