

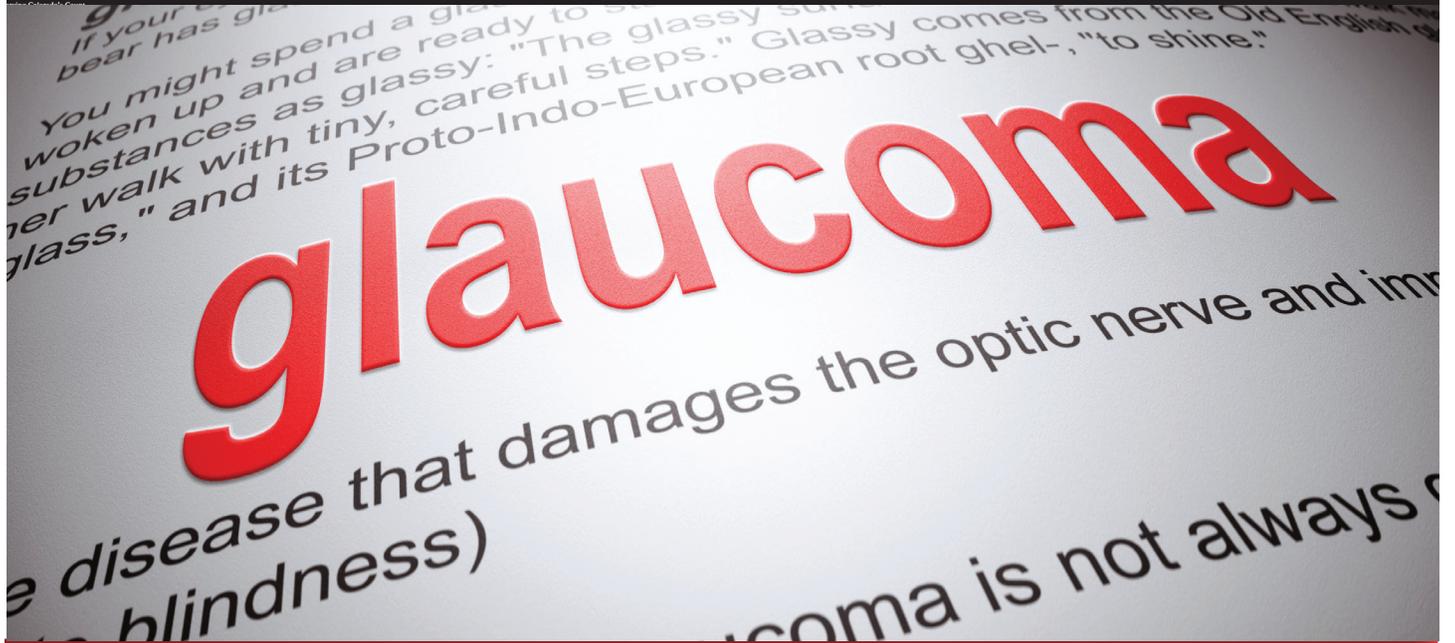
# health awareness



CTSI

A COUNTY HEALTH POOL PUBLICATION

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## GLAUCOMA AWARENESS MONTH

**G**laucoma is the name given to an assortment of eye conditions that cause damage to the optic nerve, which is crucial for good vision. The optic nerve transfers visual information in the form of electrical impulses from the retina to the brain. For many forms of glaucoma, vision loss is so gradual that the condition goes unnoticed until it has reached an advanced stage, which is why glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness for people over 60.

### Causes

Most forms of glaucoma are caused by increased pressure in the eye as shown in the glaucoma figure. Aqueous humor, the fluid that flows through the eye, drains via a web of tissue where the iris

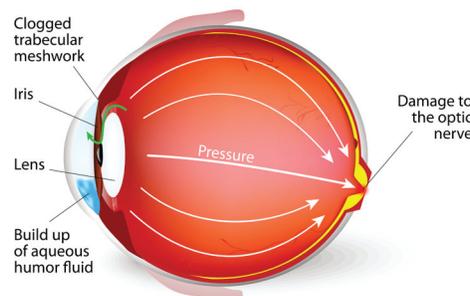
and cornea meet called the trabecular meshwork. When this tissue becomes blocked aqueous humor builds up in the eye and begins damaging the optic nerve.

Glaucoma signs and symptoms may not be obvious until the disease has advanced enough to cause significant vision loss, so it is important to be aware of the risk factors.

According to the Mayo Clinic risk factors include the following:

- Having high internal eye pressure (intraocular pressure)
- Being over age 60
- Being black, Asian or Hispanic
- Having a family history of glaucoma
- Having certain medical conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and sickle cell anemia
- Having corneas that are thin in the center
- Being extremely nearsighted or farsighted
- Having had an eye injury or certain types of eye surgery
- Taking corticosteroid medications, especially eyedrops, for a long time

### GLAUCOMA



(Article is continued on reverse side.)

## Prevention

Early diagnosis is the best defense against permanent vision loss due to glaucoma. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends regular comprehensive eye exams with dilation to help detect early vision loss and to measure intraocular pressure. Individuals under 40 should have an exam every five to 10 years. After 40, the recommendation is for a comprehensive exam every two to four years. After 55, exams should occur every one to three years and every

one to two years after 65. People at increased risk for glaucoma should follow an exam schedule recommended by their doctor.

While early diagnosis is the best way to prevent vision loss from glaucoma, there are other ways to slow its progress. Regular exercise can help reduce eye pressure. Also, eye injuries increase glaucoma risk, so take steps to prevent them by wearing eye protection when working with tools or playing sports like racketball.

## Treatments

Damage caused by glaucoma cannot be reversed, but treatment to relieve intraocular pressure can prevent or slow vision loss. Depending on the type of glaucoma and the amount of pressure in the eye, treatment options may include eyedrops, oral medications, laser treatments, surgery, or a combination of these. Even with treatment, about 15% of people with glaucoma will go partially blind within 20 years. [CTSI](#)

# Benefits Corner

## LiveHealth Online: See a Doctor in Realtime, Anytime

Anthem offers LiveHealth Online, a convenient way to visit with a doctor live, via video. Members can visit with a U.S. board-certified doctor online, any time of day without waiting for an appointment.

Most LiveHealth Online doctors are primary care physicians with an average of 15 years practicing medicine. They are specially trained for online visits and can prescribe basic medications if needed. Most LiveHealth Online visits are for common ailments such as allergies, the cold or flu, sinus infections, or family health questions.

LiveHealth Online also offers online visits for children. The online doctors can help assess conditions such as pink eye, colds, the flu, allergies, etc. and provide a treatment plan, even sending prescriptions to your local pharmacy.

Enroll for free at [livehealthonline.com](http://livehealthonline.com) or download the app from [apple.com](http://apple.com) or [play.google.com/store](http://play.google.com/store). With LiveHealth Online, visits cost \$49, subject to deductible and coinsurance. Payment can be made with most major credit or debit cards. LiveHealth Online doctors are available 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

### LiveHealth Online Psychology

In addition to physician's visits, LiveHealth Online Psychology allows you to schedule a live visit with a licensed psychologist or therapist. Most appointments can be made within four days. Appointments tend to last around 45 minutes. Patients need to be at least 18 years old. Note that LiveHealth Online psychologists and therapists do not prescribe medications.

As always, CTSI staff is here to assist you with your health, dental, vision, or life insurance coverage. You can reach us at 303 861 0507.

