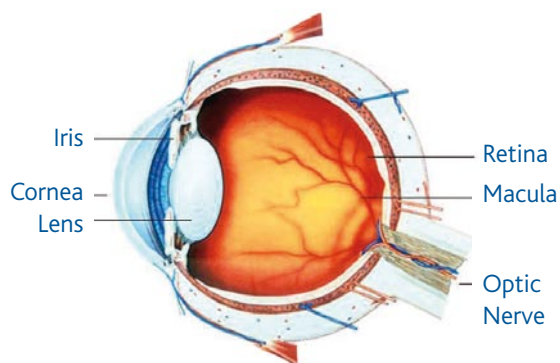


Glaucoma affects the optic nerve connecting the eye to the brain. When the drainage area at the back of the eye is blocked, fluid builds up and causes increased pressure. Damage commonly occurs when pressure in the eye is too high.

If glaucoma is not treated it can lead to blindness.

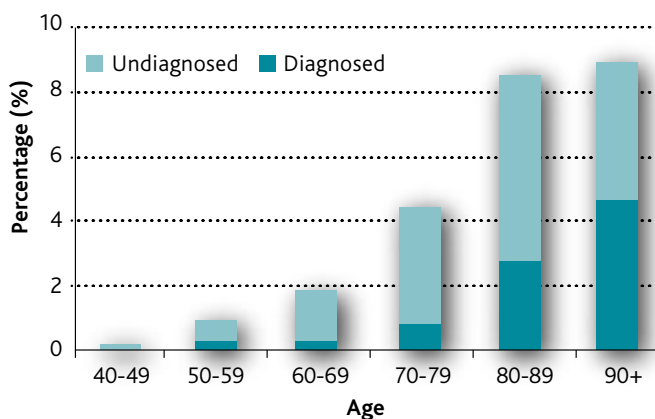
The most common form of glaucoma is 'open-angle' glaucoma. It causes no pain or discomfort and can lead to peripheral vision loss. 'Acute-angle' glaucoma is more common in Asian people. It occurs when dramatically elevated eye pressure develops suddenly, requiring immediate medical attention.



How common is glaucoma?

One in 10 people over 80 years of age has glaucoma. It is estimated about 300,000 Australians have glaucoma and about half that population have not been diagnosed.

People with a first-degree relative who has glaucoma have an 8-fold increased risk of developing the disease.



What are the symptoms?

Glaucoma progresses slowly and can often go unnoticed for a long period of time, until vision loss is advanced.

Symptoms may include:

- > Painless, blurred vision
- > Loss of peripheral vision
- > Difficulty adjusting to low light

What are the causes?

Evidence suggests a family history may be responsible for the development of glaucoma. People aged over 50 years and people who have had a serious eye injury may be at increased risk of developing glaucoma. Similarly, diabetics, people with hypertension or people taking corticosteroid medication may be at increased risk of developing glaucoma.

Can I prevent glaucoma?

There are no known ways to prevent the onset of glaucoma but early detection and treatment helps prevent vision loss.

What treatment is available?

Glaucoma is treated by reducing the pressure in the eye.

Common treatments include eye droplet medication, laser treatment and surgery to lower pressure in the eye.

If detected early enough, treatment can slow or stop further vision loss from glaucoma, but it cannot restore vision already lost.

Glaucoma research

The Glaucoma Research Unit at the Centre for Eye Research Australia is working on a range of projects to improve diagnosis and treatment for glaucoma patients and to progress towards a cure. Professor Jonathan Crowston, a leading glaucoma specialist, who established the unit and still oversees its work is also Managing Director of CERA and Ringland Anderson Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Melbourne.

Information on work in progress is regularly updated at www.cera.org.au

To support our glaucoma research with a donation, please call (TOLL FREE) 1300 737 757.