



Advanced Testing for Cataract Surgical Planning

Now Available

As everyone grows older, the lenses of their eyes thicken and become cloudier. Eventually, they may find it more difficult to read street signs. Colors may seem dull. These symptoms may signal cataracts, which affect about 70 percent of people by age 75. Fortunately, cataracts can be corrected with surgery. The following are facts people should know about the condition.

- Age isn't the only risk factor for cataracts. Though most everyone will develop cataracts with age, recent studies show that lifestyle and behavior can influence when and how severely you develop cataracts. Diabetes, extensive exposure to sunlight, smoking, obesity, high blood pressure and certain ethnicities have all been linked to increased risk of cataracts. Eye injuries, prior eye surgery and long-term use of steroid medication can also result in cataracts. If you have any of these or

other risk factors, talk to an ophthalmologist.

- Surgery may help improve more than just your vision. During the procedure, the natural clouded lens is replaced with an artificial lens called an intraocular lens, which should improve your vision significantly. Patients have a variety of lenses to choose from, each with different benefits. Studies have shown that cataract surgery can improve quality of life and reduce the risk of falling. If cataracts are interfering with your ability to see well, consider asking your ophthalmologist about cataract surgery.

There are many options for correcting your vision as a part of your cataract surgery. Today there are lenses that correct for astigmatism or presbyopia.

Four Corners Eye Clinic is excited to introduce the latest iTrace Wave-Front technology. Together with iTrace, our cataract surgeons can determine if your astigmatism or presbyopia can be corrected as a part of your cataract surgery. The results obtained with iTrace help your surgeon both evaluate your cataracts and plan your surgery. We are the only group in the Four Corners region to offer iTrace to patients. Some services may not be covered by your insurance. Talk with one of our cataract surgeons about how these services may benefit you.

Coordinating with Your Primary Care Provider

Caring for your health, in particular managing diabetes, takes a team of healthcare providers. Our physicians work closely with your primary care provider (PCP) to help monitor and manage diabetes.

Each year when we dilate your eyes and perform a comprehensive eye exam, we communicate the results of our exam with your PCP. This helps your PCP and other members of your care team stay abreast of how your vision is impacted by diabetes. If you have diabetes and have not yet had your annual exam, call our office today to schedule an exam, (970) 259-2202.





Seniors with Diabetes:

Medicare Benefits Can Help Save Your Sight

One in four Americans age 65 or older has diabetes, putting them at increased risk for vision loss and blindness. Fortunately, diabetes-related vision loss is largely preventable with regular care. Yet, studies have found a majority of Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes do not get the necessary eye exams. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recognizes November as Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness Month and reminding older Americans that if they have diabetes, Medicare will cover these critical eye exams each year.

Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes can affect the small blood vessels in the eyes, causing them to leak and grow irregularly. This leads to vision loss if left untreated. This condition is known as diabetic retinopathy and affects about 30 percent of people living with diabetes. It can also lead to other blinding ocular complications, such as diabetic macular edema. In this disease, the macula – the part of the eye responsible for detailed vision – swells, damaging vision and leading to blindness. Risk for these complications increases with age and duration of diabetes.

To prevent diabetes-related vision loss, the Academy recommends people with diabetes get a dilated eye exam each year. Getting these exams can help prevent 95 percent of diabetes-related vision loss. The exams are typically performed by ophthalmologists – physicians that specialize in medical and surgical eye care – and are covered by Medicare. Because Medicare plans vary, people with diabetes should talk with their doctor to determine the best process for setting up an eye exam. Those with Medicare Advantage may have different benefits

from those with only Medicare Part B, which is traditional Medicare.

Eye exams for people with diabetes are similar to comprehensive eye exams. They include putting dilating drops into the eyes to help the pupil expand. This allows the ophthalmologist to see the retina – the light-sensitive tissue lining the back of the eye – and look for early signs of diabetic retinopathy. These eye exams allow early detection, monitoring and treatment of diabetic eye disease. This can prevent unnecessary vision loss, enabling people with diabetes to live full and productive lives. Dilated eye exams also allow the ophthalmologist to check for conditions such as glaucoma and cataracts, for which people with diabetes are at an increased risk.

“Annual eye exams are critical for anyone living with diabetes,” said Purnima Patel, M.D., a clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology and a retina specialist and assistant professor of ophthalmology at Emory University School of Medicine. “Older Americans may be unaware that Medicare covers these exams for people with diabetes. Skipping these exams, for whatever reason, can put them at risk for a future in the dark.”

Traditional Medicare covers 80 percent of the cost of eye exams for people with diabetes. The remaining 20 percent is typically paid for by the patient. If this cost is a concern, EyeCare America may be able to help. This is a public service program of the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. It can help older Americans get a comprehensive eye exam and up to one year of care at no out-of-pocket cost. Learn more, or see if you or your loved one qualifies at www.eyecareamerica.org.

To learn more about diabetic retinopathy, its risk factors and treatment options, visit www.geteyesmart.org.

Eye Health Tips for High School & College Students

Students face special challenges to the eyes when they are under academic performance pressure. Lack of sleep, prolonged computer use and long hours studying make for tired eyes that are dry, scratchy and achy.

Prolonged computer use contributes to eye fatigue because you blink less frequently. Less blinking significantly reduces lubrication in the eye making it feel tired, scratchy and “dry” as a result. Also, eyes are not designed for prolonged focus on a single object, such as the computer. Remedy: place a note on the computer screen as a reminder to blink and to look away from the screen and focus on objects in the distance. Looking out a window (20 – 20 – 20 rule: for every 20 minutes of computer work, look away for 20

seconds, and focus on a scene or object at least 20 feet away) is a good break for the eyes. The key is to give your eyes a rest.

“Dry eye” is a common feeling from not giving your eyes enough rest while some people just naturally do not produce enough tears to keep their eyes healthy and comfortable. Some common symptoms of dry eye are stinging and burning to the eyes, scratchiness, excessive eye irritation from smoke or wind and excessive tearing. Remedy: If you have occasional symptoms of dry eye, you should try eye drops called artificial tears. These are similar to your own tears and help lubricate the eyes and maintain moisture. For persistent “dry eye,” see your Eye MD.

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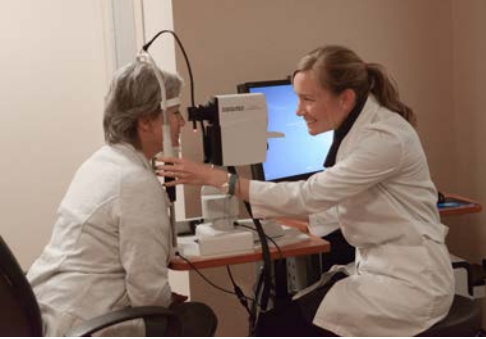
Getting to Know Dr. Brach

John Brach is a long time Coloradan. He grew up in Grand Junction and graduated from Colorado State University. After completing medical school and his internship, Dr. Brach completed his residency in Ophthalmology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. In his spare time he enjoys snowboarding, hiking, jogging and spending time with his wife and son.





Diabetes Awareness Month - November 2016



***Dr. Bourke testing
for changes to the retina.***

Diabetes is a debilitating disease that affects millions of Americans and many residents of the Four Corners Region. In this newsletter there are several articles on how diabetes can impact your vision and what you can do about it. One important step for diabetic patients is to have an annual, dilated eye exam. Any of our physicians can perform this exam. In addition, Dr. Karyn Bourke has completed her fellowship training in both medical and surgical care for diseases affecting the retina. Whether you have your annual exam with her or another physician, you may be referred to Dr. Bourke to help manage diseases of the eye that manifest from your diabetes. This is one of the benefits of trusting your eye care to a multi-specialty practice. Four Corners Eye Clinic is the only multi-specialty ophthalmology practice in the Four Corners Region.

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