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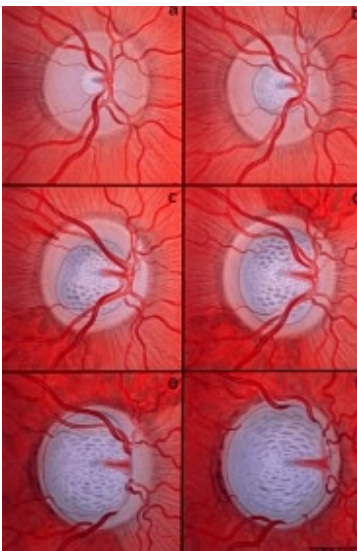
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Patient Information: Glaucoma - Chronic Simple

The eye produces a fluid called the aqueous humour. This fluid circulates around the tissues of the eye and drains away through outflow channels.

'Normal' eye pressure is when the amount of fluid produced is balanced by the amount of fluid draining away. If the fluid in the eye does not balance then the pressure inside the eye becomes raised - chronic glaucoma. Glaucoma, if untreated, causes damage to the optic nerve at the back of the eye, ultimately resulting in loss of vision.



Series of diagrams showing progressive loss of tissue from the optic nerve at the back of the eye (referred to as increased cupping of the optic nerve).

**Diagram a. represents a normal eye.
Diagram f. represents a very advanced case with extensive loss of tissue.**

Signs and Symptoms

Glaucoma causes damage to your field of vision. This means that the edge of your peripheral vision can start to disappear although the central vision remains good.

Early diagnosis is important as the pressure in the eye will gradually rise over time and patients are usually not aware that they have glaucoma. Treatment can prevent the damage from becoming worse but it cannot reverse damage that has already happened.

Glaucoma can be hereditary but the commonest link is with increasing age. If there is a history of glaucoma in your family you are entitled to a free eye tests and should have them on a regular, annual basis. Ideally everyone over the age of 40 should have a regular eye test for glaucoma.

Glaucoma tests

Pressure Check

A local anaesthetic drop will be placed in both eyes. These drops only last for 2-3 minutes, then a measurement probe gently touches the eye.

Field Test

A test can be carried out to check the peripheral vision. All tests are quick and painless and simply require you to press a button when a light is seen.

Treatment

Treatment aims to reduce the pressure in the eye either by helping the fluid to drain away or by reducing the amount of fluid produced.

The usual treatment is the use of eye drops on a long term, regular basis.

Eye drops are a treatment not a cure and once started must be continued until you receive advice otherwise from your ophthalmologist.

Further information and help

International Glaucoma Association

Woodcote House
15 Highpoint Business Village
Henwood, Ashford
Kent
TN24 8DH

Sightline (helpline) no: 01233 64 81 70

Administration no: 01233 64 81 64

Our Website is: www.glaucoma-association.com

Disclaimer

The information provided in this document is intended as a useful aid to general practitioners, optometrists and patients. It is impossible to diagnose and treat patients adequately without a thorough eye examination by a qualified ophthalmologist, optometrist or your general practitioner. Hopefully the information will be of use prior to and following a consultation which it supplements and does not replace.

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