

# Eye on Health

## Don't Lose Sight Of Diabetic Retinopathy

(NAPSA)—Thousands of American adults are at risk of losing their vision as a result of complications from diabetes.

Approximately 13 million Americans have been diagnosed with diabetes. Another 5.2 million have the disease and don't know it. All people with diabetes, both type 1 and type 2, are at risk for diabetic retinopathy, a leading cause of vision loss and blindness.

To reduce the risk of vision loss, the National Eye Institute (NEI) of the National Institutes of Health encourages people with diabetes to have a dilated eye exam each year and recommends the following behaviors to help people keep their health on **TRACK**:

- **Take your medications.**
- **Reach and maintain a healthy weight.**
- **Add physical activity to your daily routine.**
- **Control your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol.**
- **Kick the smoking habit.**

Diabetic retinopathy occurs when diabetes damages the tiny blood vessels inside the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. A healthy retina is necessary for good vision. If you have diabetes, be sure to have a dilated eye exam at least once a year, as diabetic retinopathy often has no early warning signs.



**If you have diabetes, visit your eye care professional for a dilated eye exam at least once a year.**

Clinical research, supported in part by the NEI, has shown that maintaining good control of blood sugar, blood pressure, and blood cholesterol is essential in slowing the development and progression of diabetic retinopathy.

Don't lose sight of diabetic retinopathy. If you have diabetes, get a dilated eye exam at least once a year and keep your health on **TRACK**.

To learn more about diabetic retinopathy and what you can do to protect your vision, visit the NEI's Web site at [www.nei.nih.gov/diabetes/](http://www.nei.nih.gov/diabetes/). The NEI conducts and supports research that leads to sight-saving treatment and plays a key role in reducing visual impairment. The NEI is part of the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.