

Focus On Eye Health

Getting Maximum Benefit—Medicare Can Help

(NAPSA)—There is important news about eye disease: There are often no warning signs. This means that you could have one and not know it. Two such diseases are glaucoma and diabetic eye disease. Glaucoma is a group of diseases that can damage the optic nerve of the eye. It usually occurs when the normal fluid pressure in the eye rises above safe levels. Diabetic eye disease refers to a group of eye problems that people with diabetes may face as a complication of their disease. If left untreated, glaucoma and diabetic eye disease can cause permanent vision loss and even blindness.

Good News: Glaucoma and diabetic eye disease can be detected through a comprehensive dilated eye exam. Early detection is important because both diseases can be treated and controlled, which can help prevent major vision loss before it occurs.

Better News: Medicare will help people at higher risk for glaucoma pay for a comprehensive dilated eye exam every 12 months. People with Medicare coverage who can use the glaucoma benefit include:

- African Americans age 50 or older



- Hispanics age 65 or older
- People with a family history of glaucoma
- People with diabetes.

Take advantage of Medicare benefits that may protect your sight. Make plans to see an eye care professional for a dilated eye exam. For more information about these Medicare benefits, visit www.medicare.gov or call (800) MEDICARE.

The National Eye Institute (NEI) is one of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Federal government's lead agency for vision research. For more eye health information, visit the NEI Web site at www.nei.nih.gov.

To learn more about glaucoma, visit <http://www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma/>.

To learn about diabetic eye disease, visit <http://www.nei.nih.gov/diabetes/>.