

Our Health

Are You At Risk For Glaucoma? Take A Family Glaucoma Snapshot

(NAPS)—Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness among African-Americans. But, with early diagnosis and treatment, most people can retain their vision for life.

What is glaucoma?

In a healthy eye, fluid is made and drained through a small drainage canal. When something blocks this natural drainage, the pressure inside the eye goes up. Glaucoma is often caused by increased pressure that develops when the fluids in the eye are not draining properly. This condition eventually damages the nerve that connects the eye to the brain and leads to loss of vision.

Am I at risk?

- Risk factors include family history, race and older age.
- Glaucoma is 6 to 8 times more common in African-Americans than Caucasians.
- African-Americans ages 45-65 are 14 to 17 times more likely to go blind from glaucoma than Caucasians with glaucoma in the same age group.

What are the symptoms?

The condition may seem to come on suddenly; most cases progress so slowly there are often no warning signs before damage inside the eye has occurred.

How is glaucoma treated?

Glaucoma can be treated with any of the following:

- Eye drops that lower eye pressure.
- Laser therapy that allows for better drainage of fluids inside the eye.
- Eye surgery to create a new drainage canal.
- If untreated, glaucoma does lead to total blindness.

In the fight against blindness caused by glaucoma, EyeCare



Glaucoma doesn't have to interfere with leading a happy and fulfilling life. Detecting the disease early can save your sight.

America asks people to take a Family Glaucoma Snapshot by following these simple steps:

- ASK: "Does anyone in our family have glaucoma?"
- CALL: 1-800-391-EYES (3937) to see if you qualify for a FREE exam.
- TELL: Your family if you have glaucoma and have them call EyeCare America.

EyeCare America's Family Glaucoma Snapshot campaign is intended to raise awareness among African-American communities about the risk factors for glaucoma. EyeCare America encourages people to call its Glaucoma EyeCare Program at 1-800-391-EYES (3937) to find out if they are eligible for a free glaucoma eye exam.

EyeCare America offers medical eye services and free information through its national Glaucoma EyeCare Program. Uninsured patients receive the care at no charge.

EyeCare America's Glaucoma EyeCare Program is co-sponsored by Pfizer Ophthalmics.