

News & Comments

High Blood Pressure and Your Eyes

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A person's eyes can also tell us a lot about their health, just like they can indicate their emotions. Eye problems can be related to organs in some cases, but they can also be related to other systemic issues. Blood vessel changes in the eye can signal brain and other body changes early on. One of the first signs of high blood pressure may be in the eyes.

Only half of the world's 1.3 billion hypertensive individuals are aware of their disease or have been diagnosed with it. There are few warning signs or symptoms of high blood pressure, so many people do not realize they have it. It takes time for high blood pressure to develop. In many cases, it's caused by a poor diet, inactivity, tobacco, and excessive alcohol consumption over many years. In addition to a family history of high blood pressure, other conditions, such as diabetes and kidney disease, may also pose a risk. Though there are different tests available to check high blood pressure, be it a stethoscope, automated arm cuff, etc. In addition, an optometrist can detect signs of high blood pressure much earlier than a doctor.

High blood pressure can damage these small blood vessels, causing blurry vision due to their sensitivity to changes in blood pressure. In addition to high blood pressure, high levels of fluid may build up beneath our retina, which may affect eye health as well. When an optometrist inspects a patient's eyes for high blood pressure, they will look for swelling, inflammation, and dysfunctional blood vessels. Blood vessel diameters in the eyes may also be measured to predict who is at a higher risk of developing hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

Similar to the brain's circulation, the eye's circulation follows a similar pattern. The eyes are often called "the window to the brain" because they develop from brain tissue. As a result, changes in the blood vessels of the eye can serve as an early warning sign about what may be happening in the brain and elsewhere in the body. A GP or home blood pressure device would need to confirm any changes that your optometrist spots in the eye's blood vessels, however, as they can also be caused by other diseases (such as diabetes). Despite the fact that an eye exam is not meant to replace a doctor's visit, it is often the first place to detect high blood pressure, since patients are often symptom-free. A doctor of optometry may also detect signs of other diseases, such as diabetes, that can also damage the eyes.

KEYWORDS

Optometry, High blood pressure, Eye health, Eyes, Heart health, Cardiac Disease, Optometrists, hypertension

