



Diabetic Eye Disease

Keeping Vision Healthy

For people living with type 1 diabetes (T1D), eye disease is a haunting reality—40%-60% develop diabetic eye disease, sometimes resulting in blindness. JDRF knows how critical eyesight is to managing T1D—from checking food labels to reading glucose levels on a monitor—and preserving quality of life. JDRF funds research to stop the progression of diabetic eye disease and reverse this life-altering complication of T1D.

What Happens

Diabetes can cause changes to tissues in the eye, leaving many people with serious, vision-impairing eye disease. Today's treatments for diabetic eye disease can drastically improve the life of someone living with a T1D-related eye disease, and early detection can reduce the risk of blindness by 95%. If you or a loved one has been recently diagnosed, it is important to discuss eye disease screenings with your doctor as soon as possible.

"I'm so grateful to have benefitted from the life-changing research being done to introduce new treatment options and reverse the effects of eye-related complications. I look forward to the day when vision loss is one less thing for people living with T1D to worry about."

— Elisabeth W., 39 years old, diagnosed at age 7

Current Treatments



Anti-VEGF Therapy: A drug that promotes the healthy regrowth of damaged blood vessels in the eye. However, 50% of people who receive this treatment do not have a complete response and are left with vision impairment.



Photocoagulation: A laser treatment that heals a damaged retina in someone with vision loss. However, it is not yet able to restore full eyesight.



Steroid Injections: Doses of an anti-inflammatory drug that protect blood vessels in the eye. Yet some people with T1D still develop other eye diseases such as glaucoma and cataracts.



Interested in taking part in a clinical trial? After answering a few questions, you'll be matched with clinical trials that may be right for you at jdrf.org/clinical-trials.

Diabetic Eye Disease by the Numbers

40%-60%

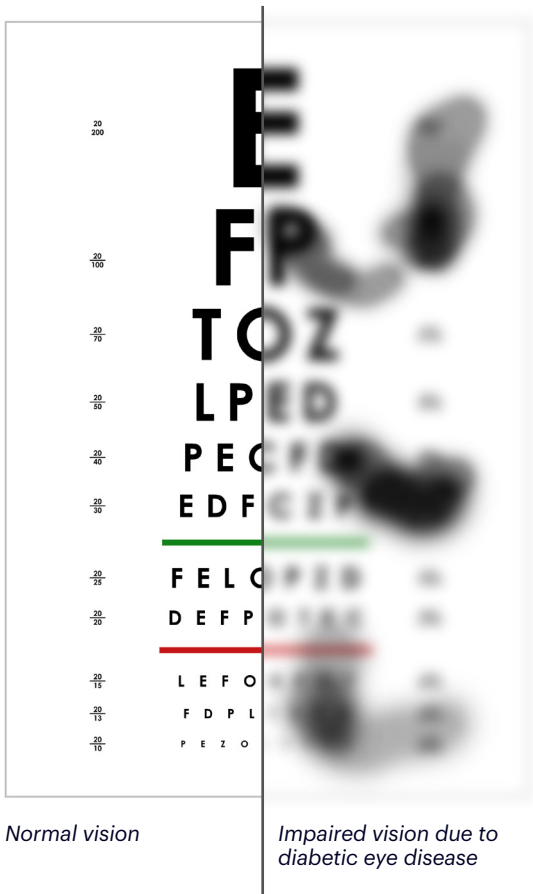
of people with T1D develop diabetic eye disease within 20 years of diagnosis

39%

of people with T1D are at risk for vision-threatening eye disease

5,000 - 6,000

new cases of diabetic eye disease are diagnosed yearly in the United States



- 2006** JDRF researchers show in clinical trials that a drug called Lucentis® (ranibizumab) is effective at promoting the growth of new blood vessels under the retina in people experiencing this T1D-related eye disease.
- 2009** JDRF researchers discover that two drugs used to treat high blood pressure, losartan and enalapril, can stop diabetic eye disease from progressing.
- 2012** The drug Lucentis® (ranibizumab) is the first drug approved by the FDA for the treatment of diabetic eye disease.
- 2015** A gene that protects the retina from diabetic eye disease in the Medalist cohort (people that have been insulin-dependent for 50+ years) is found by a JDRF-funded investigator. This gene could be a potent therapeutic marker to prevent the progression of eye disease in people with T1D.
- 2016** JDRF funds a clinical trial to test if anti-VEGF therapy can prevent vision loss. If the therapy works, it could benefit all of those with T1D who haven't been diagnosed with eye disease, yet.
- 2017** A cholesterol drug has shown promise for reducing eye damage in people with type 2 diabetes, and JDRF is funding a clinical trial to see if it works in T1D. If it's successful, the drug could provide a low-cost treatment that can rapidly be translated to the clinic world wide.
- 2018** JDRF launches the Mary Tyler Moore Vision Initiative, creating a roadmap to eye disease research, including an updated staging system and a retinal image bank, with the ultimate goal to halt and reverse vision loss in people with diabetes.

2023

Every gift takes us one step closer to curing T1D. Find out how you can support JDRF and make a difference in the lives of people with T1D by visiting jdrf.org/donate.

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