

Glaucoma: ensure early detection

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Glaucoma or kala-Motia is a silent killer of vision. By the time one becomes aware of it, usually lot of damage to optic Nerve is already done.

Glaucoma cannot be cured. But it can be controlled and further damage to the Optic Nerve can be slowed down or halted. This control can only be sustained through very disciplined and regular treatment as advised by the Ophthalmologist. It is a life long process.

Early detection of glaucoma is most important as timely treatment will prevent further loss of vision and preserve existing vision.

Regular eye checkups are particularly important for people whose risk of glaucoma is higher than average. This includes

- Family history of Glaucoma
- Those suffering from diabetes or hypertension
- Those above age of 35 years
- Use of high minus or plus numbered glasses
- History of use of steroids

How is glaucoma controlled?

The goal of treating open-angle glaucoma is to preserve vision by lowering intraocular pressure and preventing further optic nerve damage. Here are some facts about the main forms of treatment in use today:

1 MEDICAL MANAGEMENT: Drugs for open angle glaucoma are the most widely used method of treating this disease. These medications are taken as eye drops or pills. Some improve fluid drainage, while others lower pressure by inhibiting fluid formation. Most cases of glaucoma can be controlled with one or more medications, and a majority of patients tolerate these drugs well.

However, in a few patients intraocular pressure is not adequately controlled by medications. Also, some people find that the drugs side effects- such as stinging in the eye, blurred vision, or headaches- do not go away after the first few weeks of use but continue to be a problem.

2 SURGICAL MANAGEMENT: Now ophthalmologists generally reserve surgery for patients whose glaucoma cannot be controlled by medications and for those who are unable to tolerate the side effects of these drugs. During the operation, the surgeon makes an opening to create a new drainage pathway so that aqueous can leave the eye more easily. After surgery, a few patients still need to use medication to keep their pressure under control and avoid loss of vision. And if the new drainage opening closes, a second operation may be needed.

3 LASERS IN MANAGEMENT OF GLAUCOMA: Some types of lasers can control open angle glaucoma. The procedure is called ALT (Argon Laser Trabeculoplasty) .It is helpful in 50-60% of patients to lower the IOP. But usually, people who have this surgery must continue taking some glaucoma medication afterwards, although they may be able to lower the dosage and still keep intraocular pressure under control. However, the pressure lowering effect of the laser treatment may wear off eventually, and for this reason patients sometimes have a second or third treatment session.

In angle closure glaucoma YAG Laser is used to do peripheral iridotomy. This prevents further attacks of acute congestive glaucoma.

Glaucoma And You

The treatment option chosen to control glaucoma depends on the type of glaucoma, severity of the damage which has already occurred, patient compliance, convenience and affordability. Control of glaucoma can only be effective if patients adhere to the treatment schedule prescribed by their ophthalmologist. Remember, it is your vision, and you must do your part in maintaining it.

**Early detection is the only way to manage the glaucoma so -
Immediately get in touch with us, if you experience any of the following:**

- Severe Eye Pain
 - Sudden loss of vision
 - Coloured Halos
 - Nausea and/ or Vomiting
 - Poor Night Vision
 - Persistent redness of the eye
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