

FORESIGHT

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Optometrist

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE



Yes, high blood pressure can affect the eyes whether it is undiagnosed or under poor control. Unfortunately, patients do not typically have any visual symptoms associated with high blood pressure. Retinal complications inside the eye usually arise leading to a condition known as hypertensive retinopathy. Optometrists can identify hypertensive retinopathy during an annual eye examination when they dilate your pupils to see inside the eye more thoroughly.

When hypertensive retinopathy exists, the arteries become narrowed and they do not follow their usual smooth course. When high blood pressure is severe and longstanding, the artery walls appear silver in colour, hemorrhages develop and retinal swelling begins to take place.

If hypertensive retinopathy is detected, you will need to see your family doctor to manage your blood pressure properly. You will also need to see an optometrist or ophthalmologist periodically (every 1 to 3 months). They need to monitor the inside of your eyes until the high blood pressure has been brought under control and the signs of hypertensive retinopathy have subsided.

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