**Early Detection Critical to Treating Glaucoma**

Glaucoma is a major cause of vision loss worldwide. It affects more than 3 million people in the United States—nearly half of whom are unaware they have the disease. During Glaucoma Awareness Month in January, the [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] joins the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](https://www.aao.org/) in reminding the public that early detection and treatment can help protect your sight.

Glaucoma damages the optic nerve, which transmits visual information from the retina to the brain. Typically, the disease initially has no signs or symptoms. If left untreated, glaucoma can cause irreversible blindness.

The Academy recommends that everyone have a [comprehensive](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/eye-exams-101) eye exam at age 40. This exam provides ophthalmologists – physicians who specialize in medical and surgical eye care – an opportunity to carefully examine the eye including the optic nerve for signs of damage and other possible problems that may affect vision. Individuals at greater risk for developing glaucoma include people:

* over age 40;
* of African, Asian or Hispanic heritage;
* who have high eye pressure detected during an eye exam;
* who are farsighted or nearsighted;
* who have experienced eye trauma or eye injury;
* whose corneas are thin in the center;
* or who have health problems such as diabetes, migraines, high blood pressure or poor blood circulation.

Appropriate treatment for glaucoma depends on the specific type and severity of the disease. Medicated eye drops or laser treatments are the most common initial approach. These techniques work by lowering eye pressure to reduce the amount of fluid in the eye, and by increasing fluid outflow from the eye.

“Glaucoma is typically symptomless to patients; however, permanent, irreversible vision loss can already be taking place,” said Andrew G. Iwach, M.D., a clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. “Early detection is paramount to avoiding blindness and managing this disease.

[INSERT YOUR SPOKESPERSON’S QUOTE HERE]

For more information on glaucoma or other eye conditions and diseases, visit the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s [EyeSmart®](https://www.aao.org/eye-health) website.

**About the American Academy of Ophthalmology**

The American Academy of Ophthalmology is the world’s largest association of eye physicians and surgeons. A global community of 32,000 medical doctors, we protect sight and empower lives by setting the standards for ophthalmic education and advocating for our patients and the public. We innovate to advance our profession and to ensure the delivery of the highest-quality eye care. Our EyeSmart® program provides the public with the most trusted information about eye health. For more information, visit [aao.org](http://www.aao.org).

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