

Hypertensive Retinopathy

This material will give you an overview of hypertensive retinopathy, its causes and how it is treated.

What is hypertensive retinopathy?

Hypertensive retinopathy occurs when high blood pressure damages the blood vessels in the retina. The retina is like the film of the eye. It captures images to send to the brain.

What causes hypertensive retinopathy?

More severe damage occurs with higher blood pressures. Also, the longer the pressure has been high, the greater the possible damage.

Your risk of damage to the eye increases when:

- You have diabetes
- You have high cholesterol levels
- You smoke

People do not experience any symptoms until late in the disease, so most people only know if their blood pressure has affected their retina if their eye doctor tells them. Late in the disease, you could develop vision loss.

At any point, if you have high blood pressure and you have a sudden change in your vision or get a bad headache, seek medical help immediately at your nearest emergency room as this can mean that your blood pressure is dangerously high.

How is hypertensive retinopathy treated?

The main treatment is controlling your high blood pressure. The retina will often recover if blood pressure is controlled.

For more information, scan the code with your smartphone or visit the website listed.



<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000999.htm>

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