

## Wellness Articles

Attached are weekly health and wellness articles provided by Alberta Health Services. As a way to help all Albertans live a healthy life, we welcome and encourage weekly newspapers, community newsletters and other publications to reproduce this information free of charge. Credit to Alberta Health Services or the identified content provider would be appreciated.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: [Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca). You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

---

**Proposed publication date:** Mar. 2, 2020

**Content provided by:** Alberta Health Services, [myhealth.alberta.ca](http://myhealth.alberta.ca)

---

## Diagnosis, treatment of a common eye disease

World Glaucoma Week takes place Mar. 8 to 14, 2020.

Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness in Canada. It is the name for a group of eye diseases that damage the optic nerve. This nerve carries information from the eye to the brain. When the nerve is damaged, you can lose your vision.

Glaucoma is one of the most common causes of legal blindness in the world. At first, people with glaucoma lose side (peripheral) vision. But if the disease isn't treated, vision loss may get worse. This can lead to total blindness over time.

### What causes glaucoma?

The exact cause isn't known. Experts think that increased pressure in the eye (intraocular pressure) may cause the nerve damage in many cases. But some people who have glaucoma have normal eye pressure.

Some people get glaucoma after an eye injury or after eye surgery. Some medicines (corticosteroids) that are used to treat other diseases may also cause glaucoma.

### How is glaucoma diagnosed?

Glaucoma can be diagnosed:

- During routine examinations with your eye doctor.
- When you go to your family doctor because of an eye problem. Your doctor will ask you questions about your symptoms and do a physical examination. If your doctor thinks

you have glaucoma, you will then need to see an eye doctor for eye examinations and tests.

### **How is it treated?**

Glaucoma can't be cured. But there are things you can do to help stop more damage to the optic nerve. To help keep your vision from getting worse, you'll probably need to use medicine (most likely eye drops) every day. You may also need laser treatment or surgery. You'll also need regular checkups with your eye doctor.

### **How do you cope with glaucoma?**

If you have vision loss, you can keep your quality of life. You can use vision aids, such as large-print items and special video systems, to help you cope with reduced eyesight. Support groups and counselling may also help you deal with vision loss.