

### Treatment

There are two treatments for diabetic retinopathy which are very effective in reducing the loss of vision.

#### Laser surgery and Vitreous surgery

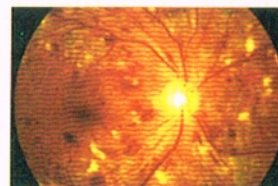
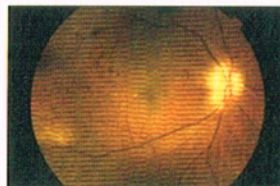
It is important to remember that though both these treatments are successful, they do not cure diabetic retinopathy. One would wonder why undergo treatment if it does not cure the disease?

Treatments are successful in stopping the leak or destroying the new vessels and to prevent further damage to the retina. Damage done cannot be undone. Patients who develop very advanced stage of diabetic retinopathy are prone to retinal detachment.

**Anti VEGF** : Vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) is secreted by cells that are oxygen deprived and stimulate the growth of these abnormal blood vessels. The idea behind anti-VEGF drugs is to block the VEGF from stimulating the growth of these new blood vessels which damages the rod and cone cells by leaking blood and fluid.

### Tips for diabetics

- Control your blood sugar
- Avoid smoking
- Maintain a healthy diet
- If diagnosed before 30, please have an eye examination within five years of diagnosis.
- If diagnosed after 30, please have an eye examination as soon as the diagnosis is confirmed
- Pregnant women must have an eye examination within the first three months of pregnancy.



# Diabetic Retinopathy

A reality check



## Dr. Ajay I. Dudani

M.S. (Bom.) D.N.B. (Ophth) F.C.P.S. D.O.M.S. (Bom.)  
Vitreoretinal Fellowship

• Sankara Nethralaya, Madras • National Nagoya Hospital, Japan

**VITREORETINAL SURGERY & LASER SPECIALIST  
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#### Mumbai Retina Centre :

101, Kirti Manor, S.V. Road, Opp. Phiroze Dastoor & Sons,  
Santacruz (W), Mumbai-400 054.

Tel : 2604 1065 [www.mumbairetinacentre.com](http://www.mumbairetinacentre.com)

Time : 5.00 to 8.30 p.m. Mon-Sat.



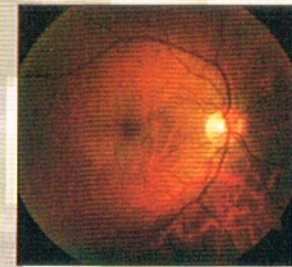
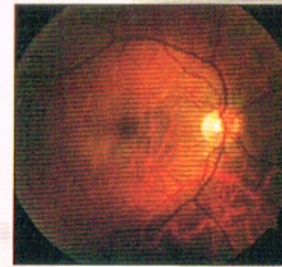
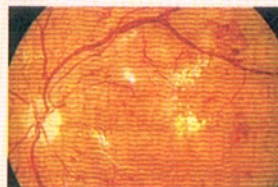
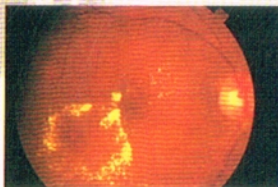
Diabetes is one of the fastest growing diseases in India. According to the World Health Organisation, India is expected to become one of the major hubs of diabetic population during the next two decades. The number of adult-onset diabetes mellitus cases is expected to witness a staggering 266 percent increase from 18 million in 1995 to 80 million in 2030.

The prevalence of diabetes in the general population is also on the increase. It is estimated to be around 28 percent in the urban population and five per cent in the rural population. Of these diabetic patients, about 18 per cent develop diabetic retinopathy.

### **So what then is diabetic retinopathy and how does it damage the retina?**

The retina gets its food supply from various blood vessels that are present in the retina. Normally, the retinal blood vessels do not leak. But in patients with diabetes, the retinal blood vessels can develop tiny leaks, which cause fluid or blood to seep into the retina; the retina becomes wet and swollen and cannot work properly. This is known as diabetic retinopathy.

Another problem with the retinal blood vessels in diabetics is that they may get blocked. The retinal tissue, which depends on these vessels for nutrition, will no longer work properly. Further, this area then fosters the growth of abnormal new blood vessels; these new fragile blood vessels grow along the retina and in the clear, gel-like vitreous that fills the inside of the eyes. This advanced stage of diabetic retinopathy is known as proliferative diabetic retinopathy. Without timely treatment, these new blood vessels can bleed, cloud vision and destroy the retina.



### **Did you know?**

A third of people with diabetes never know that they have diabetes; just a two-thirds of diabetics go for medical attention.

A diabetes patient is 25 times more likely to go blind than a person without diabetes.

### **Symptoms**

Diabetic retinopathy often has no early warning signals. Vision may not change until the disease becomes severe, nor is there any pain. Blurred vision may occur when the macula, the central part that provides the sharp vision, swells from the leaking fluid. As the new blood vessels bleed, you may notice a few specks of dark spots or clouds, floating in your vision. Sometimes bleeding inside the eye might be of severe nature, blocking complete vision this often happens during sleep. Remember that even in advanced cases, the disease may progress a long way without symptoms; hence, regular eye examination for people with diabetes is very important.

### **Tests**

- **Slit Lamp Examination** : The slit-lamp examination provides a magnified view of the eye structures in detail, enabling diagnoses to be made for a variety of eye conditions. A hand-held lens is used to examine the retina.

- **FFA** : It is an investigative procedure that supplements clinical evaluation. It involves injection of a dye into veins and photographing the retina with blue light.

- **OCT** : Optical Coherence Tomography, or 'OCT', is a technique for obtaining cross sectional images of retina.