



January is [National Glaucoma Awareness Month](#), an important time to spread the word about this sight stealing disease. More than 3 million people in the United States have glaucoma.

What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a group of diseases that damage the eye's optic nerve and can result in vision loss and even blindness. It is the leading cause of vision loss and blindness in the United States. It has no early symptoms, so half of the people with glaucoma don't know they have it until they start losing their vision. There is no cure (yet) for glaucoma, but if it's caught early, you can preserve your vision and prevent vision loss. Taking action to preserve your vision is key.

Am I at Risk?

Although the most common forms of glaucoma primarily affect middle-aged and older adults, it can also affect people of all ages. Those at higher risk include people of African, Asian, and Hispanic descent. Other high-risk groups include people over 60 years old, family members of those already diagnosed, diabetics, and people who are severely nearsighted. [Regular eye exams](#) are especially important for those at higher risk for glaucoma and may help to prevent unnecessary vision loss.

Scan the QR code below to access this document in an online format.



What Can I Do to Prevent Vision Loss?

- The best way to protect your sight from glaucoma is to get a comprehensive eye examination. Then, if you have glaucoma, treatment can begin immediately.
- Treatment like medicated eye drops and laser eye surgery can help prevent or slow vision loss. Your eye care specialist will recommend how often to return for follow-up exams.
- Even if you are not in a high-risk group, getting a comprehensive dilated eye exam by the age of 40 can help catch glaucoma and other eye diseases early.
- Maintaining a healthy weight, controlling your blood pressure, being physically active, and avoiding smoking will help you avoid vision loss from glaucoma. These healthy behaviors will also help prevent type 2 diabetes and other chronic conditions.

WellStarME is home to a number of evidence-based resources on health and prevention topics such as [Vision](#).

To access these resources, navigate to the [WellStarME Resource Hub](#) today!

Active State of Maine employees and retirees have access to enrollment in the **Aetna Vision** Program.

To learn more about this program, coverage available, and how to enroll, please visit the [Office of Employee Health & Wellness website](#).