

# January is Glaucoma Awareness Month

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With January and the new year here, this is a perfect time to talk about glaucoma. January is National Glaucoma Awareness month so now is the time to book your annual eye appointment.

Glaucoma is the name of a group of diseases that commonly increases internal eye pressure, damages the optic nerve and causes peripheral (side/field) vision loss. Without treatment, glaucoma can cause total blindness and there is no cure for glaucoma so even with treatment vision loss will still occur. Treatment usually involves a prescribed eye drop that lowers the internal eye pressure or that can regulate the fluid entering and exiting the eye.

There are various forms of glaucoma and most of which have no early detection signs or symptoms. Usually people notice a peripheral vision loss as the first sign and by this time there is nothing the eye doctors can do to regain that vision loss. The only way to have glaucoma diagnosed before a vision loss is to have regular eye checks with your optometrist.

Approximately 4 million people in the United States have glaucoma and only half are aware of it. The people who are more at risk include African Americans, Hispanics, diabetics, people with other eye diseases and people who are over the age of 35. (Though, there are also forms of glaucoma that can be present at birth.)

If you fall under the people who are more at risk or are noticing a peripheral vision loss, please make your New Year's resolution to have an eye exam in 2012.