

DIABETIC RETINOPATHY



What is Diabetic Retinopathy?

Diabetic retinopathy is a common complication of diabetes mellitus that affects the eyes. It is caused by damage that develops at the back of the eye and it can cause vision loss and even blindness if not managed. When diabetic retinopathy is detected early (often before the start of symptoms) treatments can be very effective at preventing loss of vision. There is strong evidence to support routine screening for this complication

Who has access to Diabetic Retinopathy Screening?

Children and adults on all plan types administered by Discovery Health and are registered on the Chronic Illness Benefit (CIB) for diabetes type 1 or type 2 have this benefit without needing any authorization.

This new screening programme comprises of three levels of examinations to assess for referable diabetic retinopathy: primary, secondary, and tertiary grading examinations. Most members can be screened for diabetic retinopathy by visiting a participating optometrist, but some members can only be screened by an ophthalmologist (eye doctor). Members that qualify for screening by an ophthalmologist are:

- Members younger than 18 years of age
- Members who have visual symptoms, including:
- Vision loss that cannot be corrected
- Blurred vision
- Floaters (black or grey dots, strings or cobwebs that drift around in your vision)
- Members who are pregnant
- Members with a history of retinal surgery, laser treatment of the retina, or intraocular injections

If you do not have to go to an ophthalmologist, your optometrist or primary care provider may be equipped to perform this screening test for you. You can visit our website to find an optometrist or primary care provider who is part of our retinopathy screening network.

How does this procedure work?

Primary grading examination

A doctor or optometrist will use a special camera to take photographs of the back of your eyes. These photographs will then be uploaded to an “artificial intelligence” computer system, which will detect if you require further screening.

You will get a screening report immediately. If no signs of retinopathy are found, you will be asked to have another screening 12 months later.

There will be no cost to you for a primary grading examination when it is performed by a doctor or optometrist without our diabetic screening network. If you are unsure of whether your doctor or optometrist is part of our diabetic screening network, speak to your health coach.

If signs of retinopathy are detected, you will need an eye examination by an optometrist, i.e., a secondary grading examination

Secondary grading examination

A secondary grading examination is a more comprehensive examination performed by an optometrist. It's very important to do your secondary grading examination, immediately after you're the primary grading examination. There will be no cost to you for a secondary grading examination when performed by an optometrist within our diabetic screening network. If you are unsure of whether your optometrist is part of our diabetic screening network, speak to your health coach. The optometrist will determine if you should be referred to an ophthalmologist for a tertiary grading examination.

Tertiary grading examination

At the ophthalmologist, the diagnosis of referable diabetic retinopathy may be confirmed using the information provided or any additional tests deemed necessary by the ophthalmologist.

When diabetic retinopathy is detected early (often before the start of symptoms) treatments can be very effective at preventing loss of vision.

You will remain under the care of an ophthalmologist, with individual follow-up and treatment plan.

You are entitled to one ophthalmologist consultation per year as part of your standard basket of care. If your diagnosis of diabetic retinopathy is confirmed, you will get access to additional consultations as part of your basket of care. Discovery will pay up to the Discovery Health rate and you may be responsible for paying the balance of the account should your chosen ophthalmologist charge above this rate.



If you get services that are not part of the benefit

If you choose to receive extra tests or use an out-of-network optometrist or doctor, there may be co-payments. We will pay the co-payments from your available day to day benefits, such as your Medical Savings (MSA) or Above Threshold Benefit (ATB), to the maximum of the external medical item limit where applicable. Members who have chosen health plans without day-to-day benefit will have to pay the co-payments from their own pocket.