

# Understanding Your Eye Exam Results

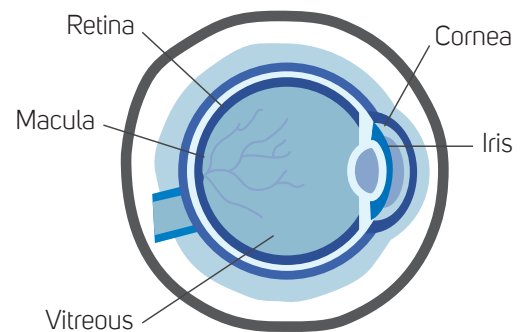
Right now, your mind must be spinning with a million questions. Will my vision get worse? Will I be able to get around? No doubt about it, getting that initial diabetic macular edema (DME) diagnosis can be overwhelming. But information is power, and learning about your disease can go far in helping you manage your illness better. **This handout is designed to help you understand what happens next.**

## ➔ What Does a Diabetic Macular Edema (DME) Diagnosis Mean?

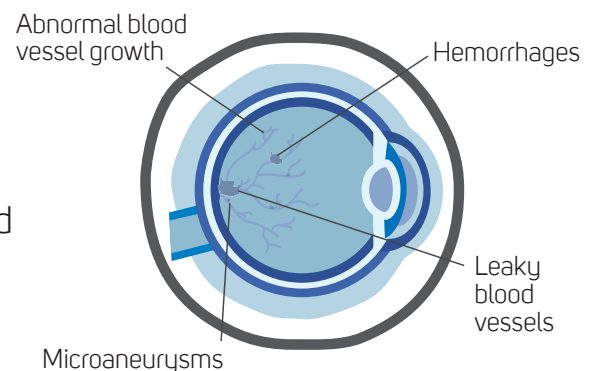
DME is a complication of diabetic retinopathy (DR). Diabetic retinopathy—the most common eye condition caused by diabetes—is caused by abnormal changes in the blood vessels of the retina, which is the light-sensitive tissue in the back of the eye. Too much glucose in the blood damages and blocks the blood vessels in the retina, preventing the retina from receiving blood and nutrients. Damaged blood vessels can also leak fluid into the part of the retina responsible for sharp central vision (the macula).

DME refers to the swelling of the macula with leaked fluid. DME can occur at any stage of DR, but it is more likely to occur as the disease progresses.

**Normal eye**



**Diabetic retinopathy/DME**



**General ophthalmologists and retina specialists are important resources to help you manage DME. They are trained to diagnose and treat retinal conditions like DME.**

**Questions? Concerns?** Don't be afraid to ask your retina specialist or general ophthalmologist about any issues you may have.

## ➔ Know the Symptoms of DME

DME can start even before you notice any symptoms.

See your eye doctor immediately if you experience any of these symptoms:



Dark spots or “floaters”  
in your vision



Blurred vision



Straight lines that  
look wavy



Washed-out colors

## ➔ Next Steps

If you have been diagnosed with DME, it is important that you continue to control your blood sugar to help reduce the long-term risk of vision loss. There are treatment options available for DME, including:

- **Anti-VEGF Drugs.** Anti-VEGF drugs bind to vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF, a naturally occurring protein that affects blood vessels in the body), which can keep blood vessels in the eye from becoming leaky. Anti-VEGF drugs are administered by injection in the eye
- **Laser.** Laser photocoagulation, a treatment that has been used for some time to treat DME, uses a beam of light to seal off or destroy leaking vessels
- **Steroids.** Steroids can reduce swelling and inflammation in the retina. Steroids are also delivered by injection in the eye

**Early diagnosis and treatment are important.  
DME can cause vision problems and even vision loss.**

Learn more at [DiabetesSightRisk.com](http://DiabetesSightRisk.com).

For additional resources,  
contact your case manager.



Commission for Case Manager Certification

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