

How will my eye doctor treat my Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a lifelong disease which can only be controlled but not cured. In addition, any damage to the optic nerve that has already occurred cannot be reversed. The aim of treatment is to prevent further damage and preserve remaining vision.

Once diagnosed, a patient requires strict follow-up with his eye doctor for the rest of his life. Your eye specialist will usually focus treatment on lowering your eyeball pressure by one or more of the following methods:

1. Eye drops

For most people, eye drops are sufficient to control the disease. They work in a number of ways, but mostly by lowering your eyeball pressure.

2. Laser treatment

There are two different types of laser treatment for glaucoma. One type is used to prevent the acute form of glaucoma in close angle glaucoma. The other type is to lower eyeball pressure in open angle glaucoma. These types of laser are not to improve vision.

3. Surgery

With advancement in minimally invasive glaucoma surgery, many patients can now reduce their reliance on glaucoma eye drops, whereas surgery was previously considered only after other treatments had failed.

How can I prevent Glaucoma?

Unfortunately, glaucoma is not a preventable disease. The best way to combat it is to detect it early. You can do this by going for regular eye checks, especially if you belong to one of the following groups:

- You are over 40 years of age and you have not had your eyes checked regularly.
- Someone in your family already has glaucoma.
- You have diabetes or high blood pressure.
- You are very short-sighted or long-sighted.



Scan the QR Code with your smart phone to access the information online or visit <https://nhghealth.com.sg>

Locate us at:

TTSH Eye Centre, Level 1
Tan Tock Seng Hospital

Clinic Appointments

- ☎ (65) 6357 7000
- ✉ ttsh.enquiry@nhghealth.com.sg
- 🌐 www.ttsh.com.sg

LASIK Enquiries

- ☎ (65) 6357 2255
- ✉ ttsh.lasik@nhghealth.com.sg
- 🌐 <https://for.sg/ttsh-lasik>

Opening Hours:

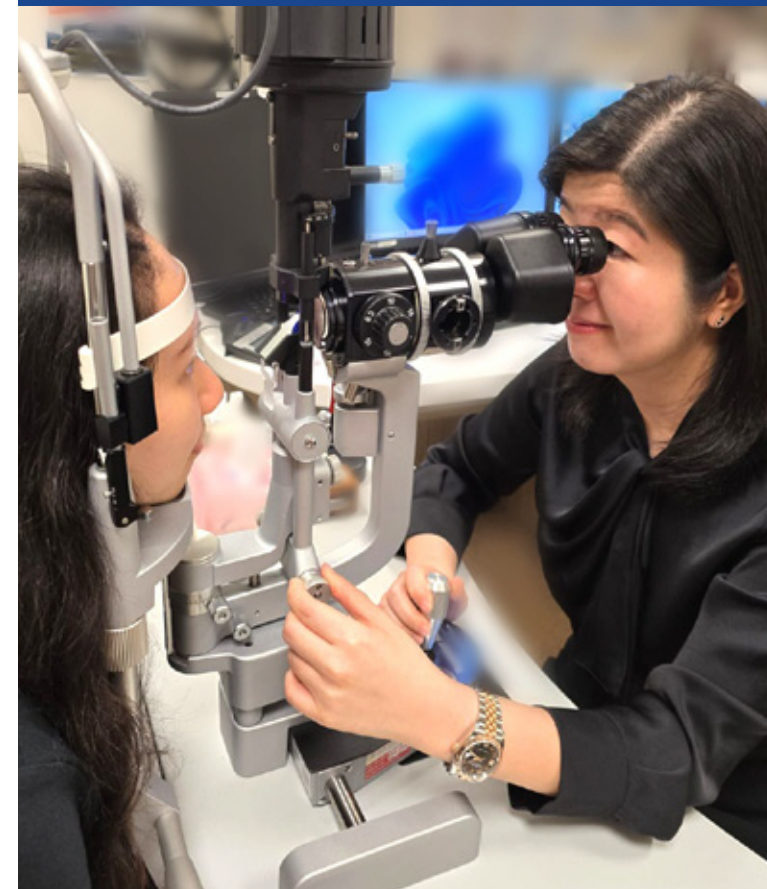
Mondays to Fridays:
8.00am to 5.30pm
Saturdays:
8.00am to 12.30pm
Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays.

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Department of OPHTHALMOLOGY

Glaucoma



What is Glaucoma?

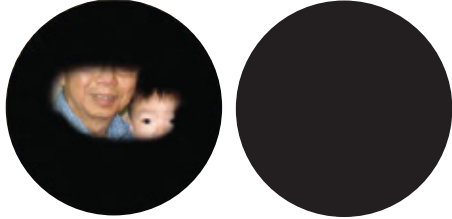
Glaucoma is Singapore's most common cause of permanent blindness. Many call it the "Silent Thief of Sight" because it can steal your vision away without you even knowing it - quietly, painlessly and irreversibly.



Normal

Early

Moderate



Late

Blind

Visual field changes in glaucoma

Glaucoma is a disease that affects the most important structure in your eye: the optic nerve. The nerve is essentially an 'electrical cable' which transmits signals from the eyeball to the brain thus allowing you to see.

In glaucoma, the optic nerve is damaged from a variety of causes.

What causes Glaucoma?

In most cases, the cause of glaucoma is unknown. However, glaucoma is age related, the incidence increases with age. Having a blood related relative suffering from glaucoma puts you at risk of developing glaucoma.

What are the types of glaucoma?

Open angle glaucoma

This is the most common type. It occurs when the eye's drainage system (the angle) gradually becomes less effective, resulting in increased eye pressure. The condition develops slowly and is typically painless.

Close angle glaucoma

This form of glaucoma occurs when the drainage system of the eye becomes obstructed, either gradually or suddenly, resulting in elevated intraocular pressure. Acute increase in eye pressure can cause pain, slower rises may be painless.

Low pressure glaucoma

In these patients, the optic nerve is inherently fragile and may sustain damage even when the eye pressure is within normal limits. Like the open angle glaucoma, it develops slowly and is painless.

Secondary glaucoma

Glaucoma may result from underlying eye diseases such as eye inflammation, steroid use, mature cataract, poorly controlled diabetes, previous eye surgery or trauma.

Glaucoma due to developmental abnormalities

While glaucoma predominantly affects older adults, it may also occur in children, young adults or infants. Such cases are rare and result from congenital or developmental anomalies of the eye's drainage system.

What are the signs and symptoms of Glaucoma?

There are two broad classes of glaucoma:

- **Chronic glaucoma** causes slow and painless reduction of vision (majority of cases).
- **Acute glaucoma** causes severe, sudden eye redness, pain and blurring of vision.

Unfortunately, most glaucoma patients suffer unknowingly from the chronic form which is painless, and only realize they have glaucoma when the disease is already quite advanced.

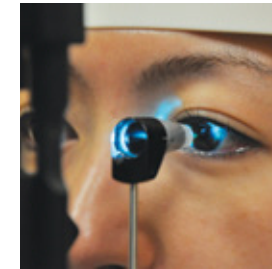
There are NO VISUAL SYMPTOMS in early glaucoma.

By the time glaucoma causes any visual problems, there is already severe and irreversible damage to the optic nerve. That is why regular eye check-ups are so important for older people and those with a family history of glaucoma.

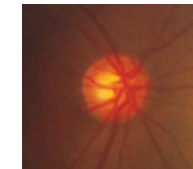
Diagnosing Glaucoma

Your eye doctor may be the only person who can tell you if you have glaucoma. He or she can do so in the following ways:

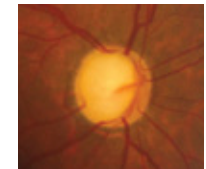
1. By checking your eyeball pressure.



2. By examining the appearance of your optic nerve.



a. A normal optic nerve.



b. The optic nerve in a patient with glaucoma looks pale and "cupped".

3. By using a computer to test your visual field.
4. By using high resolution imaging of the optic nerve.