

**Diabetes** causes abnormal changes in the retina's blood vessels, causing them to become leaky and grow where they should not. These new vessels tend to break and bleed. As they try to heal, the damaged blood vessels will contract and detach the retina.

Symptoms of diabetic retinopathy include shadows or dark objects that appear to "float" across your field of vision, blurred or distorted vision, partial loss of vision and pain in the eye.

Consistently high blood sugar and high blood pressure are associated with retinopathy. Type 2 diabetics who use the medicine rosiglitazone (brand names Avandia, Avandave and Avandaryl) to manage their blood sugar may be at higher risk for problems.

There is no cure for diabetic retinopathy. However, laser treatment (photocoagulation) is usually very effective at preventing vision loss if it is done before the retina has been severely damaged. Surgical removal of the vitreous gel (vitrectomy) may also help improve vision if the condition is caught early enough.

## Eye Tests Every Senior Should Have



Age-related eye diseases are diagnosed through an exam performed by an ophthalmologist. A comprehensive eye exam should include at least the following three tests.

- **Visual acuity test:** The familiar lettered eye chart measures how well you see at various distances.
- **Pupil dilation:** Drops are placed in the eye to widen the pupil. This allows the doctor to view more of the retina and look for signs of disease. After the examination, close-up vision may remain blurred for several hours.
- **Tonometry:** This test determines the fluid pressure inside the eye, and there are many

methods of doing so. An "air puff" test is the most common way to screen for high intraocular pressure. It is a painless process in which a small jet of air is shot against the cornea. Other more involved tests may be required to obtain more accurate readings.

Most age-related eye conditions must be detected and treated early on to prevent lasting damage. A comprehensive eye exam is recommended every one to two years, depending on a person's age and unique risk factors. These exams are vital for catching diseases like glaucoma and MD that have no obvious symptoms in the early stages. If you or a loved one is experiencing noticeable changes in vision, it is crucial to make an appointment for an eye exam as soon as possible.

## Treasures of the Northern Neck of Virginia Motorcoach Tour Wednesday October 10, 2018

Visit **Historic Christ Church** (ca. 1735) and Museum, an architectural masterpiece dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of eighteenth-century Virginia history. It is the only virtually unchanged Colonial church still in existence in America and is landscaped by the Garden Club of Virginia. Enjoy lunch at the **Historic Lancaster Tavern** (established 1790). After lunch, tour **Stratford Hall**, home of four generations of the patriotic Lee family of Virginia and birthplace of Robert E. Lee. Its magnificent setting on a high bluff above the Potomac River and its bold architectural style set it apart from any other colonial house. Both sites are National Historic Landmarks. The all-

