

OPEN-ANGLE GLAUCOMA



What is open-angle glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that affect the optic nerve and can lead to vision loss. The most common type (about 90% of all cases) is called *primary open-angle glaucoma*. It generally develops gradually and painlessly – without early warning signs – so most people don't experience any symptoms until their vision is affected.



What causes it?

Your eye contains a clear, watery liquid that feeds the inside of the eye. Liquid is constantly being drained out of the eye and new liquid is made to replace this. If the liquid can't drain out quickly enough, the pressure inside the eye builds up. Over time, this pressure can damage the optic nerve, which can eventually affect vision.



What are the signs and symptoms?

Early symptoms of open-angle glaucoma are uncommon. However, some people experiencing this condition do have complaints earlier in the course of the disease – like missing words while reading, missing stairs while walking, or having difficulty driving.



How is it detected?

A comprehensive eye exam with pupil dilation is usually conducted to detect open-angle glaucoma. During the evaluation, the eye care professional measures pressure in the eye and thickness of the cornea; they may also use special tools to assess damage to the optic nerve.



How is it managed?

Open-angle glaucoma may be managed in the following ways:

Medication

There are different medications available to treat open-angle glaucoma. Typically, they come in eye drop form and are used to reduce pressure within the eye. In some instances, oral medications (in tablet or pill form) may also be used.

Laser therapy

A laser procedure may be recommended to enhance fluid drainage from the eye and help lower eye pressure. Results may be temporary, so repeat sessions may be required.

Surgery

Surgical procedures are sometimes utilized to create new fluid passages from the eye, with the goal of improving drainage and reducing pressure.



Experts suggest there's no cure for open-angle glaucoma – it may require lifetime monitoring and routine management.