What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a disease involving damage to the optic nerve and subsequent vision loss or blindness. The exact causes of glaucoma are not known. The condition is often associated with increased pressure inside the eye, but it can also occur in people with normal pressure.

Primary Open Angle Glaucoma (POAG) is the most common form of glaucoma. It begins with painless damage to the optic nerve which later causes irreversible loss of vision. Vision loss slowly progresses and blindness may result.

Once any form of glaucoma has been diagnosed it can be managed with various treatment options which are determined by your ophthalmologist.

What are the symptoms of Glaucoma?

- Damage to the eye progresses very slowly and sight is lost gradually, starting with the peripheral vision. People with glaucoma seldom notice these blind areas until considerable damage has occurred.
- Glaucoma often affects both eyes, but one eye may be more affected than the other.

Who is at risk of Glaucoma?

- People over the age of 40 are more likely to develop glaucoma than young people. Almost 3% of the Australian population over 55 years are affected.
- Glaucoma has a genetic link and can occur in families. People with a blood relative diagnosed with glaucoma should regularly visit their eye health professional.
- People with extreme refractive error, people with previous eye injuries and people who have taken corticosteroids are at greater risk of developing glaucoma.
- Only half of Australians with glaucoma know that they have the disease.

What is the best defence against Glaucoma?

Regular eye examinations to ensure early detection and treatment are the only way to control glaucoma and prevent vision loss.

Where Can I Go for More Information?

Ask you doctor or eye health professional about having regular eye tests to help detect glaucoma as early as possible to prevent vision loss. For more information visit www.glaucoma.org.au or call Glaucoma Australia on 1800 500 880.

www.saveyoursight.org.au