



# Behind Your Eyes

For the Patients & Friends of  
Eye to Eye Ophthalmology

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## THE EFFECTS OF DIABETES ON THE RETINA

Adult-onset diabetes is one of the most common diseases affecting Americans today. Unfortunately, due to America's ever-expanding waistline, the problem will continue to worsen. Diabetes can affect the part of the eye that forms the images you see with, the retina, causing "diabetic retinopathy." Estimates are that by 2050 the number of Americans 40 or older with diabetic retinopathy will triple from 5.5 million to 16 million.

Diabetes affects the retina, at first with only focal areas of bleeding and small aneurysms of the retinal blood vessels (nonproliferative diabetic retinopathy). The longer you have uncontrolled diabetes, the worse the blood vessel problems get. The aneurysms start to leak fluid. If this fluid accumulates in the center of your vision (macular edema), it starts to cause vision loss.

The blood vessels start to die off in places, causing a lack of blood flow to the retina. This triggers signals to grow new blood vessels. Unfortunately, these new vessels grow in the wrong places, are disorganized, and are fragile so they bleed easily. This is proliferative diabetic retinopathy and can cause severe vision loss. The new blood vessels bleed into the eye, filling it with blood so you cannot see, and they can pull up on the retina, causing a retinal detachment.

There are several treatments for diabetic retinopathy available so do not despair. Laser treatments and anti-VEGF injections are very helpful for this disease. Since diabetic retinopathy can silently do its damage at first without vision loss, it is very important for diabetics to get their eyes checked yearly. The earlier you treat diabetic retinopathy, the more favorable the outcome. If you or someone you know has diabetes, make sure you have had a recent eye checkup.

## EYE TO EYE FOCUS

This is a feature of our newsletter where we place the spotlight on one of our staff so you can get to know them better for your next visit to the office. This newsletter highlights the member of our Eye to Eye family that has been with us the longest, Joanne. She is our head technician and surgical coordinator.

Joanne is one of the first faces you see when you come to the office. She does the initial workup before you see Dr. Luscvage. She also performs the ancillary testing and contact lens teaching. Joanne's other responsibility in our office is surgical coordinator. She is the go-to woman for any of you having surgery in our office for questions, testing and scheduling.

Joanne has been a technician for 25 years and has worked for Eye to Eye for 8 years. She has a husband (John), two children (Jana 19 and Jay 15), a dog (Abby), and a cat (Princess). Joanne is originally from Garnet Valley and currently lives in Thornton. We are very lucky to have such a charming, knowledgeable professional as Joanne working with us!



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## In the News...

Thank you everyone for your support of Girl Scout troop 41384 in their girl scout cookie sale!! This year is the 100 year anniversary of the Girl Scouts and they are having a big celebration on the National Mall in Washington, DC in June. The money from this sale allows these young ladies to attend this once in a lifetime event.

Dr. Luscavage is going to be a judge at the Chester County Science Fair for the third year in a row. She will be at the Lucy Balian Roarke Fair for grades 6-12 on March 8th. Wish her luck picking a winner!

Did you know... Eye to Eye to Eye Ophthalmology's office sits on land that was part of the Battle of the Brandywine (Sept. 11, 1777) in the Revolutionary War. The colonists fought the British as they left Kennett Square (which they occupied) and attempted to cross the Brandywine River. The first wave of colonists met the British right where we sit and there was heavy fighting here.

### **Important Phone Numbers &**

#### **Resources**

Eye to Eye Ophthalmology

610-388-9755

Eye to Eye Fax

610-388-9756

Riddle Memorial Hospital.

610-566-9400

Wills Eye Hospital

215-928-3000

Behind Your Eyes is a production of Eye to Eye Ophthalmology. Comments or suggestion can be addressed to Joe Luscavage at 610-613-9887 or email Eyetoeyeop@aol.com